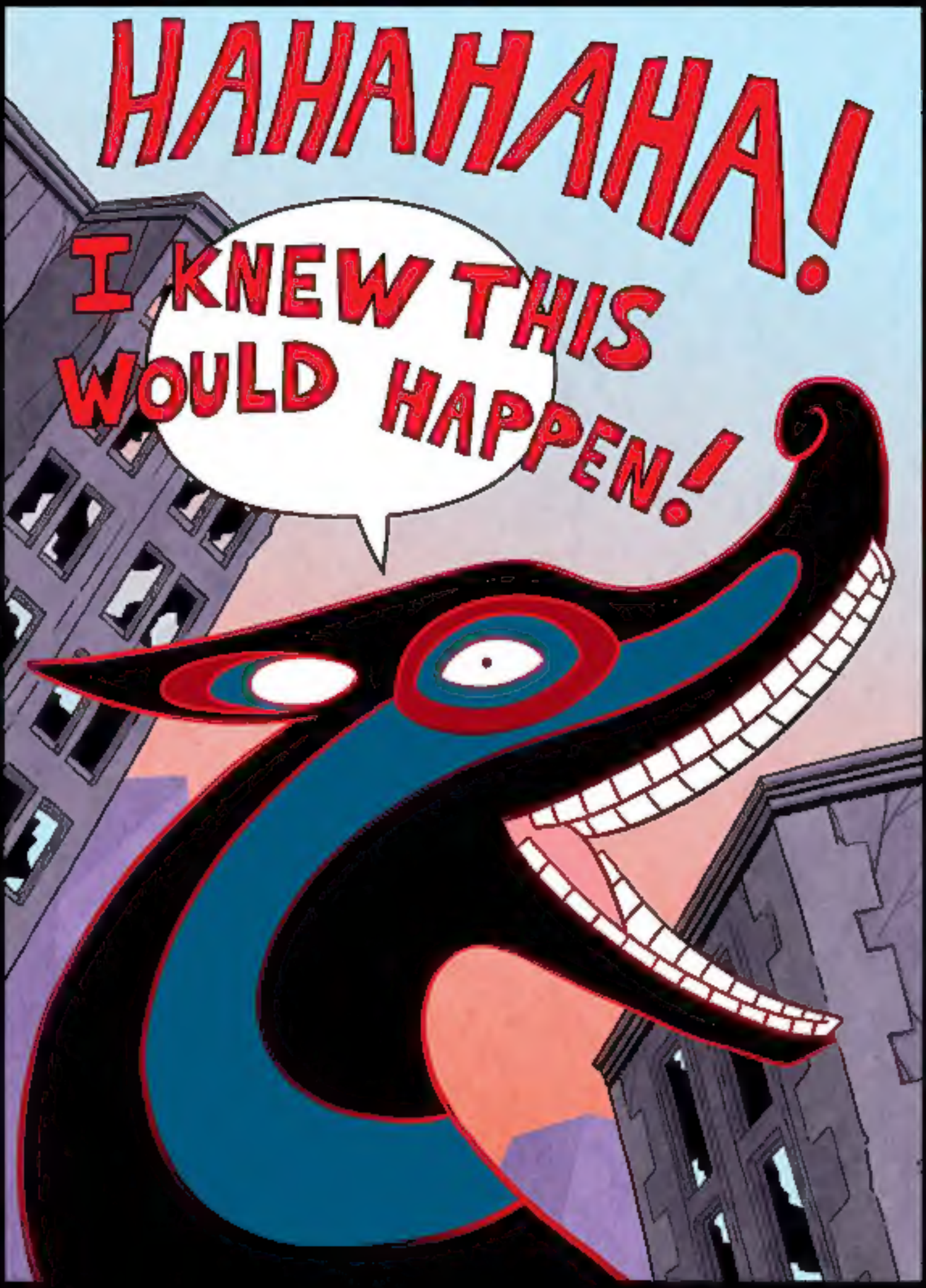
Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 90:

Coyote Knew This Would Happen


HAHAHA!
I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN!

When I first met you, fire head girl, I knew you were the type of person Ysengrin would be drawn to!
your steadfast and unflinching behavior, there was something about you that he could not help but respect!
I did what I could to foster the relationship between the two of you, bringing you closer!

I knew that, when he took my power, he would try to live amongst the humans while he gathered the pieces of my plan!
and, in this guise, I also knew he would find a way to be close to you, and be drawn in even more!
and now, here he is, in love with you, fire head girl!
hahaha!
tell me, can you bear to kill the one you love so dearly?!
and you, how must it feel knowing she will plunge my tooth into your very heart?!

...
coyote, Loup and I are not in love.
but he said...
he's in love with someone else.
hello there!
and you are?

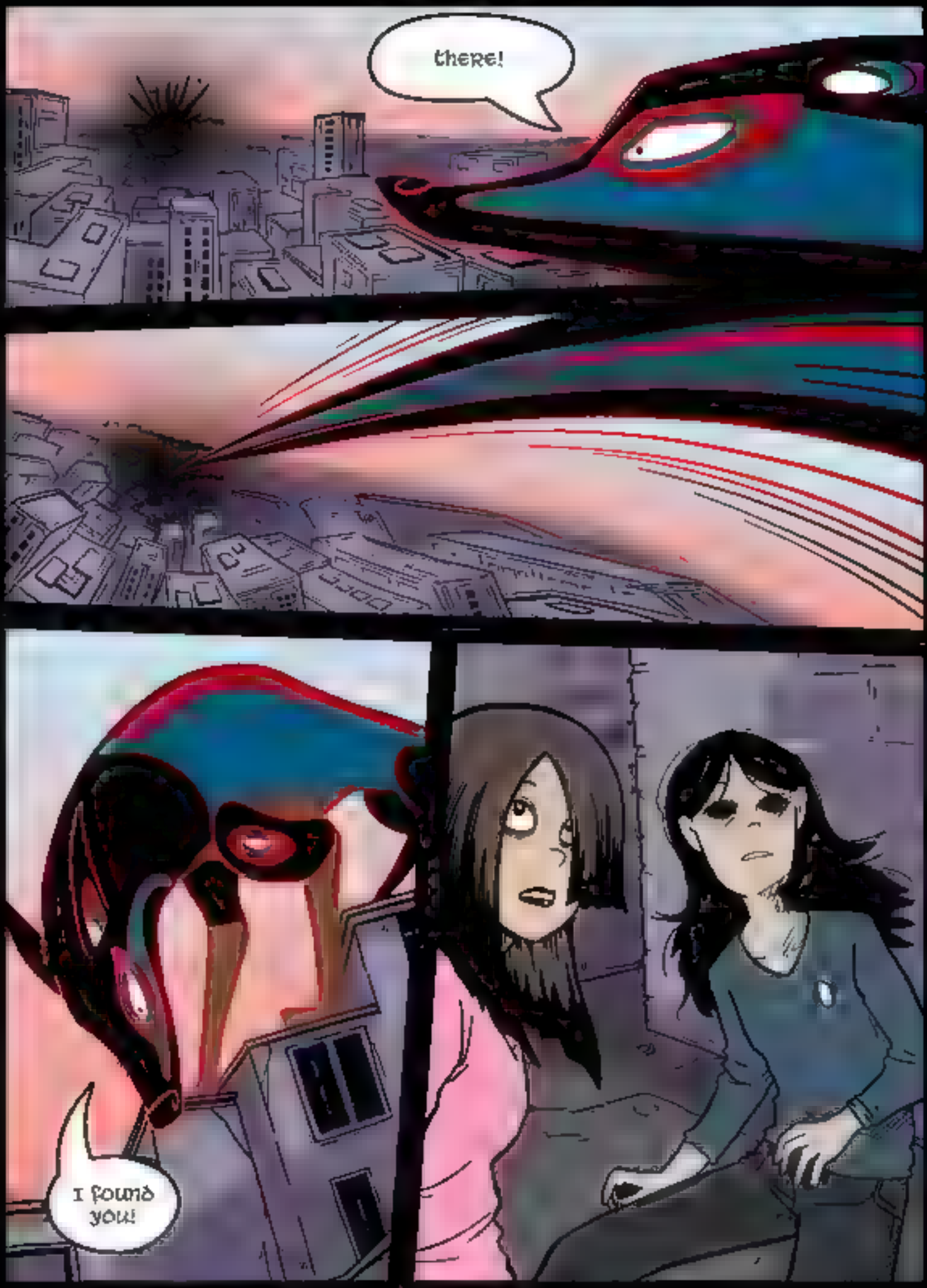
I'm Lana!
I'm Jerrek's girlfriend!
Jerrek's...
you fell in love with the wrong person?!

you... aren't even human!
what are you?
well, we like to consider ourselves new peopl
some sort of golem?
coyote!
they are creations of a divine being!
a powerful person that created them as you once did the shadow men!
a new god walks the earth?
and they dare interfere with my plans?!

Loup you fool!
you allowed yourself to be lost in your disguise!
and set your sights on this creature!

CRUNCH
Lana!
now, Loup,
use the power I gave you!
and we will find this so called divine being!

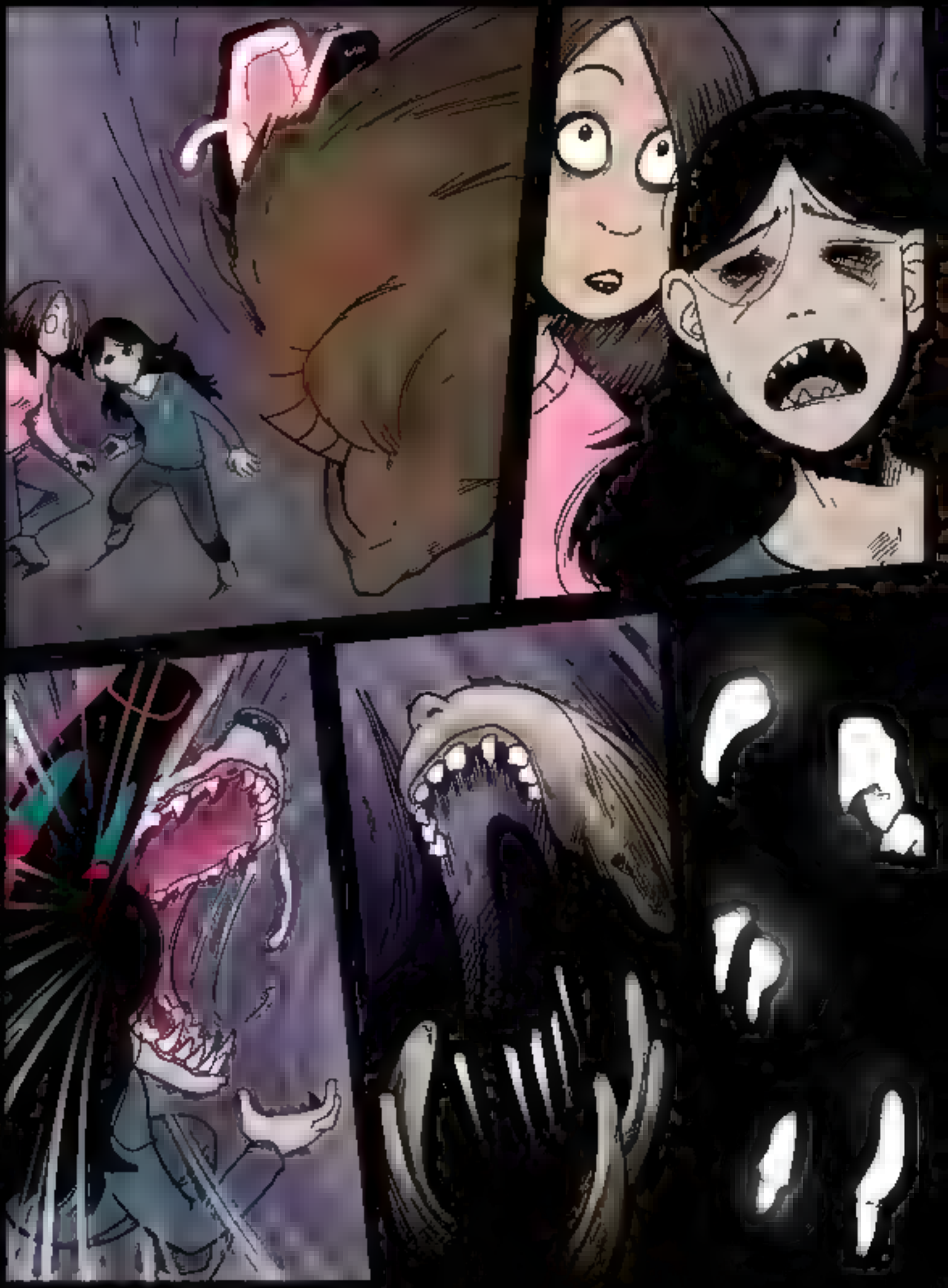
this being should be one of great power...
no, I know what that is.
the court's cowardly plan to flee.
a light on the horizon...
perhaps an area of darkness...

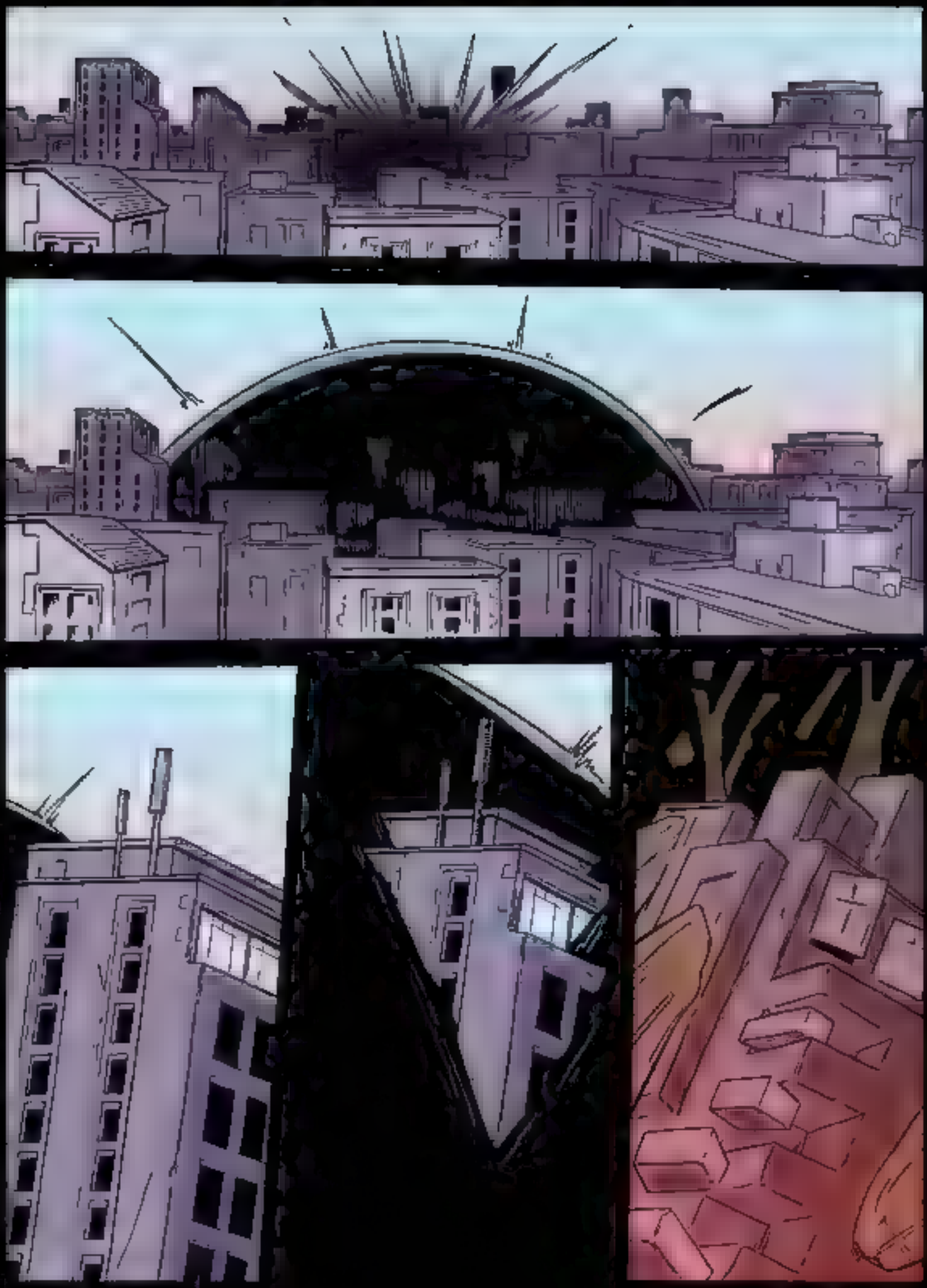

there!
I found you!

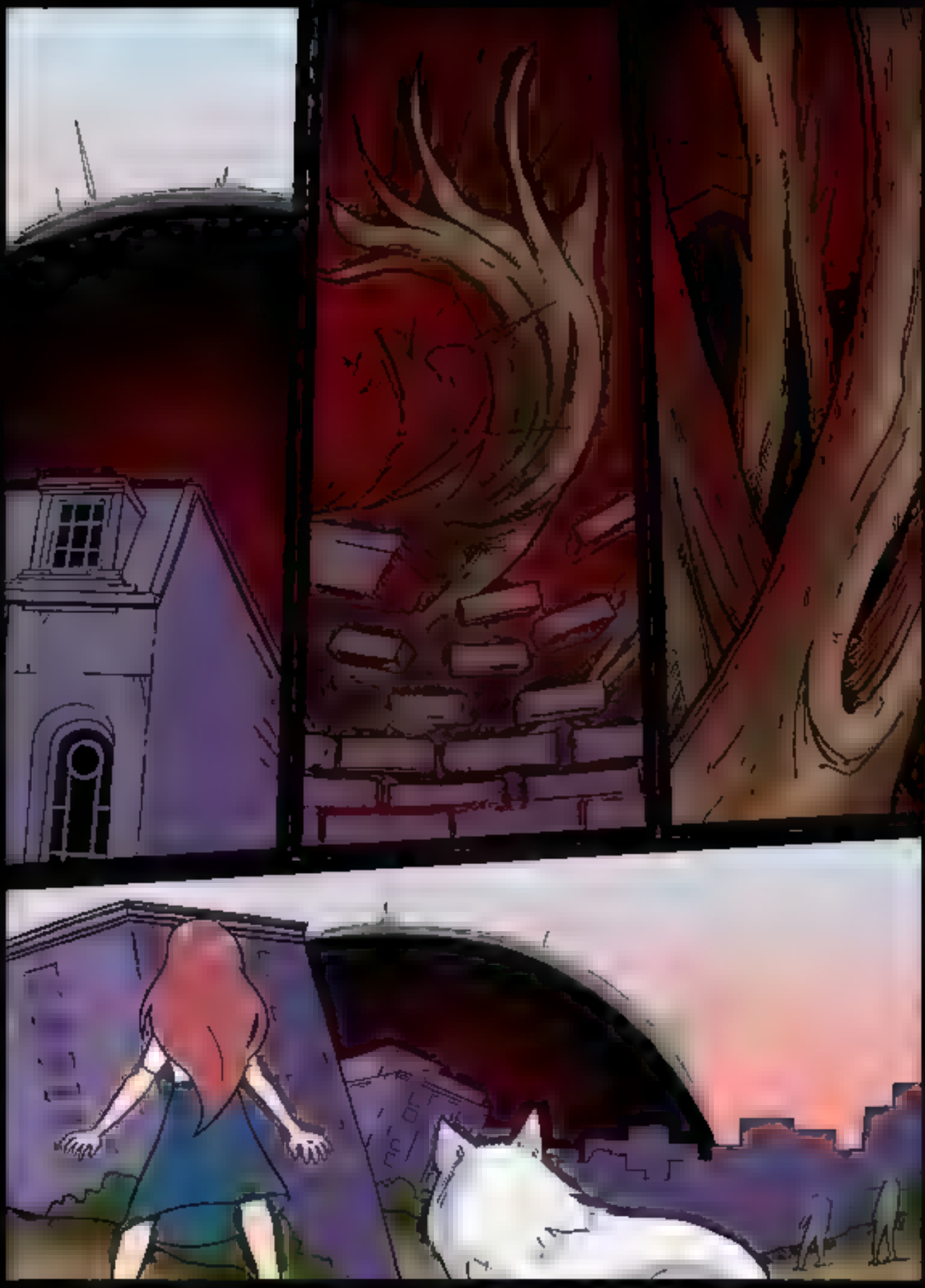
L-Lana...

JERREK, I...
ah .. terrible luck, old boy...

no, Loup!
keep control of yourself!
this is what coyote wants you to do!
SHARP







oh no.
what is it?
it's zimmy.
stay close!

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 91:

Into the Distortion

Renard, is that really you?
as - as far as I can tell...
you seem... normal.
well, always glad to hear it.

ah, the new people...
they seem real too.
but they look different in the ether now.
miss annie, do you know what's happening?!

We're inside a distortion made by a girl I know
But it looks different...
It looked like it started from far away, but we were still caught in it.
Coyote must have had influence over this as well.
I can access my powers.
as can I
It looks like the world was affected, not us.
It's usually the other way around.

you've experienced this before?
a few times, yes.
coyote must have gone looking for kat and found zimmy instead.
ah, yes, he would not have been able to see kat in the ether. luckily for her
miss kat... the angel was still transferring recovered cpus when this happened. but that has stopped now
all that remain are these plants...
wait, let me see

ah! Is that a cpu?
things in a distortion like this might not be as they seem
sometimes an object could even appear metaphorically
you should probably still collect these seeds and look after them while we deal with this
for now, we should regroup
is there a way to contact kat?
oh! that device she gave us...
CLICK

nothing's happen -
huh?
KIM
KIM
KIM
what is all this?
miss, if I may.
CLICK
SNAP
CLICK
It appears to be a communication device
Guys! Can you hear me?!
Kat!

oh good, the teleporter does work!
I couldn't activate my loup barrier, but I was able to find your location when you pressed that button.
wait, kat: the radio you sent, did you mean to send it in small pieces?
what? no! that wasn't supposed to happen...
darn, I guess the teleporter is too risky to use right now.
anyway, I'm guessing this is all caused by loup?
no, it wasn't loup. it's coyote and zimmy
...!
coyote came back and...
he ate lana...

he what?!
can you... bring her back?
you still have her cpu, right?
annie...
I could make her body again but the mind transfer is a one-time thing.
It can't be done a second time
oh no... poor Lana...
for now... just tell me what's happened. are you okay over there?

okay, it sounds like what's happening here, too.
the new people and I are fine, but everything looks messed up...
do you think this reached all the way to the shore?
possibly, yes. this distortion is far bigger than anything I've seen.
people must be freaking out.
you need to get home and let them know what's going on!
m-me?!
yeah! unless the court has another coyote and zimmy expert on hand, you're the best person to handle this!

the court was looking to mess with monsters like coyote and zimmy, and look what they got.
zimmy isn't a monster.
I'll help as much as I can, but when it comes to matters in the ether, there's not much I can do.
you're the first person I'd turn to!
thanks, kat
we'll get through this

excuse me, miss.
we overheard you talking to the angel, and we would like to go with you.
there are not many cpu seeds left to collect, and we would like to take them to the angel directly.
we would also like to gather together in memory of lana
oh . of course
the more the merrier.

we are ready to leave now
then let's head off!
but.. which way do we go?
this way

this doesn't look like the court .
no, it's all very .. zimmy.
the buildings aren't quite right
make sure to stay close and don't wander off alone!

wh-what is that?!
I'm guessing something from the depths of zimmy's mind
It comes with the territory
Literally, in this case.

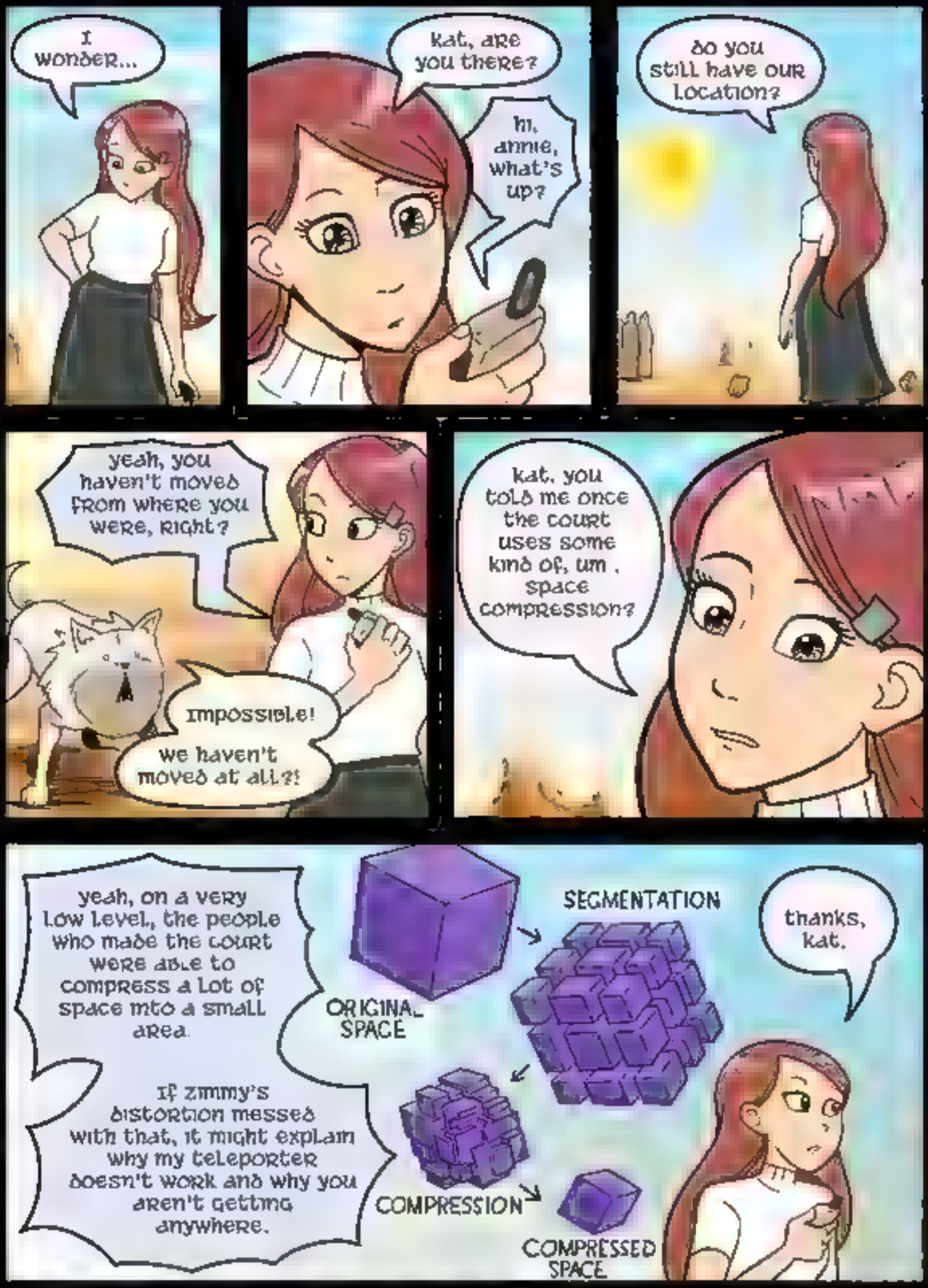
BSSH

we can't go deeper into this...
look!
head to that light!

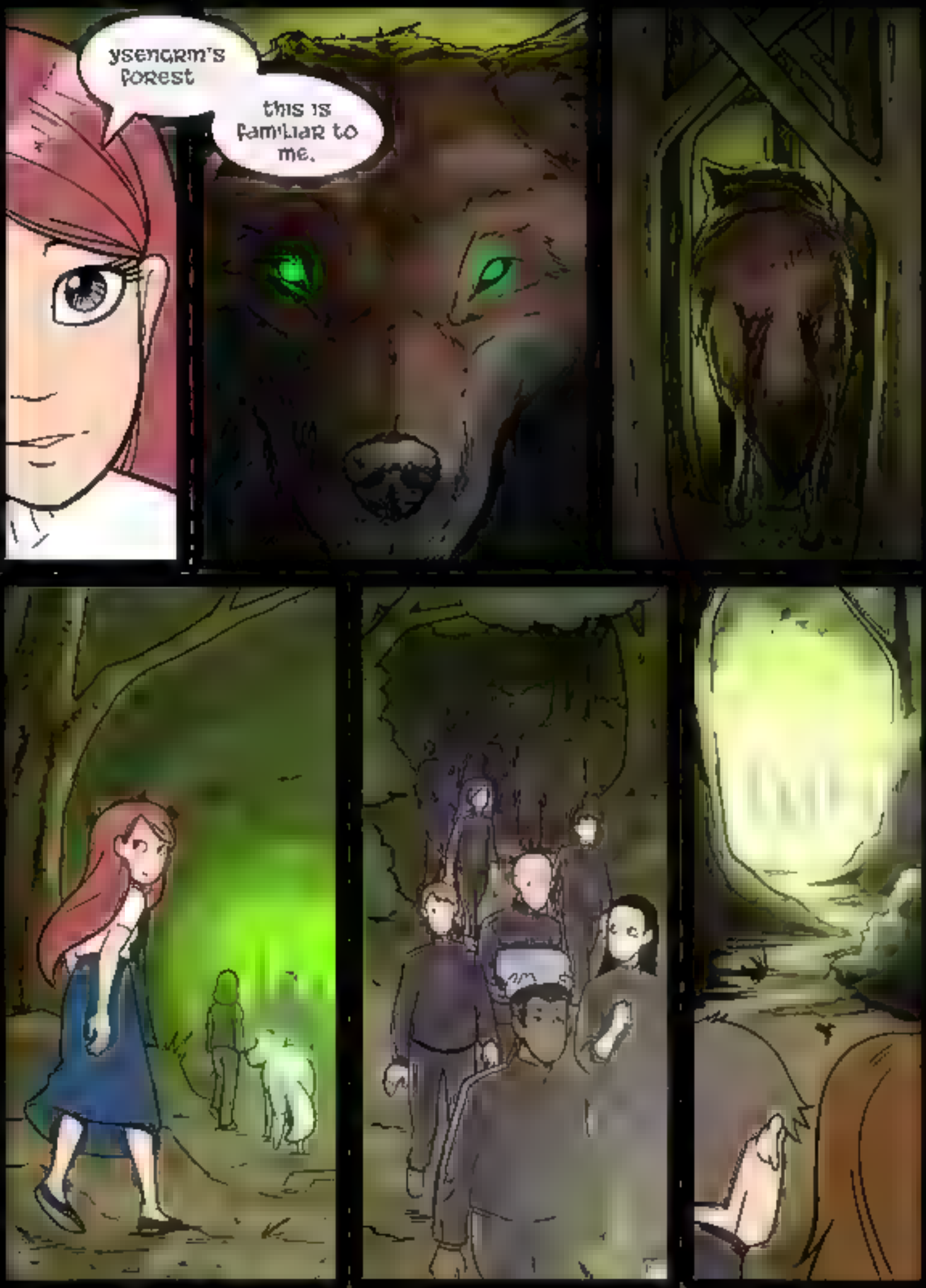
coyote .
this is starting to make sense
is it?

tee hee!
wayward travelers!
If you seek the way, you must answer.
What bends as it straightens
has nothing to prove
but if you find one
you will always find two?
a riddle.
Mrr mrr.. Mr...
I know the answer

FLUFF
um...
this is coyote's manifestation, we don't have to follow his rules
I suspect we need to think about traveling less literally


I wonder...
kat, are you there?
hi, annie, what's up?
so you still have our location?
yeah, you haven't moved from where you were, right?
impossible!
we haven't moved at all?!
kat, you told me once the court uses some kind of, um, space compression?
yeah, on a very low level, the people who made the court were able to compress a lot of space into a small area.
if zimmy's distortion messed with that, it might explain why my teleporter doesn't work and why you aren't getting anywhere.
ORIGINAL SPACE
SEGMENTATION
COMPRESSION
COMPRESSED SPACE
thanks, kat.

I picked a direction that looked familiar to me... I thought it looked like the court
but it wasn't.
then we ran from those monsters and we ended up somewhere far away, but unfamiliar,
In that case we should look for something familiar and head towards that?
but this landscape is very alien to us
to me, too...
the sun
we all recognise the sun.
sunlight...
passing through the leaves


ysengrim's forest
this is familiar to me.

court!
strange days, eh?!
we're trying to figure this all out... we were looking to find our way back home
so were we, and we found this!
we don't know how you did it, but we like this new forest that sprang up!
feels like home.
it would make sense the tree elves are more comfortable here than in the court.

the trees are bendy here!
nice and supple.
could get a house up in a few hours I reckon
THUD
CRUNCH
moss ogre!

heh, haven't seen one in a while since we got to the court!
FS-SSH

STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
ysengrm clearly thought very highly of you.
he isn't the fool I thought he was.

I think they're watching out for the tree elves.
Other creatures that used to live in the forest might have found their way here, and they aren't all friendly.
Ysengrin would want to keep things in order.
Oh!

ah! this is familiar!

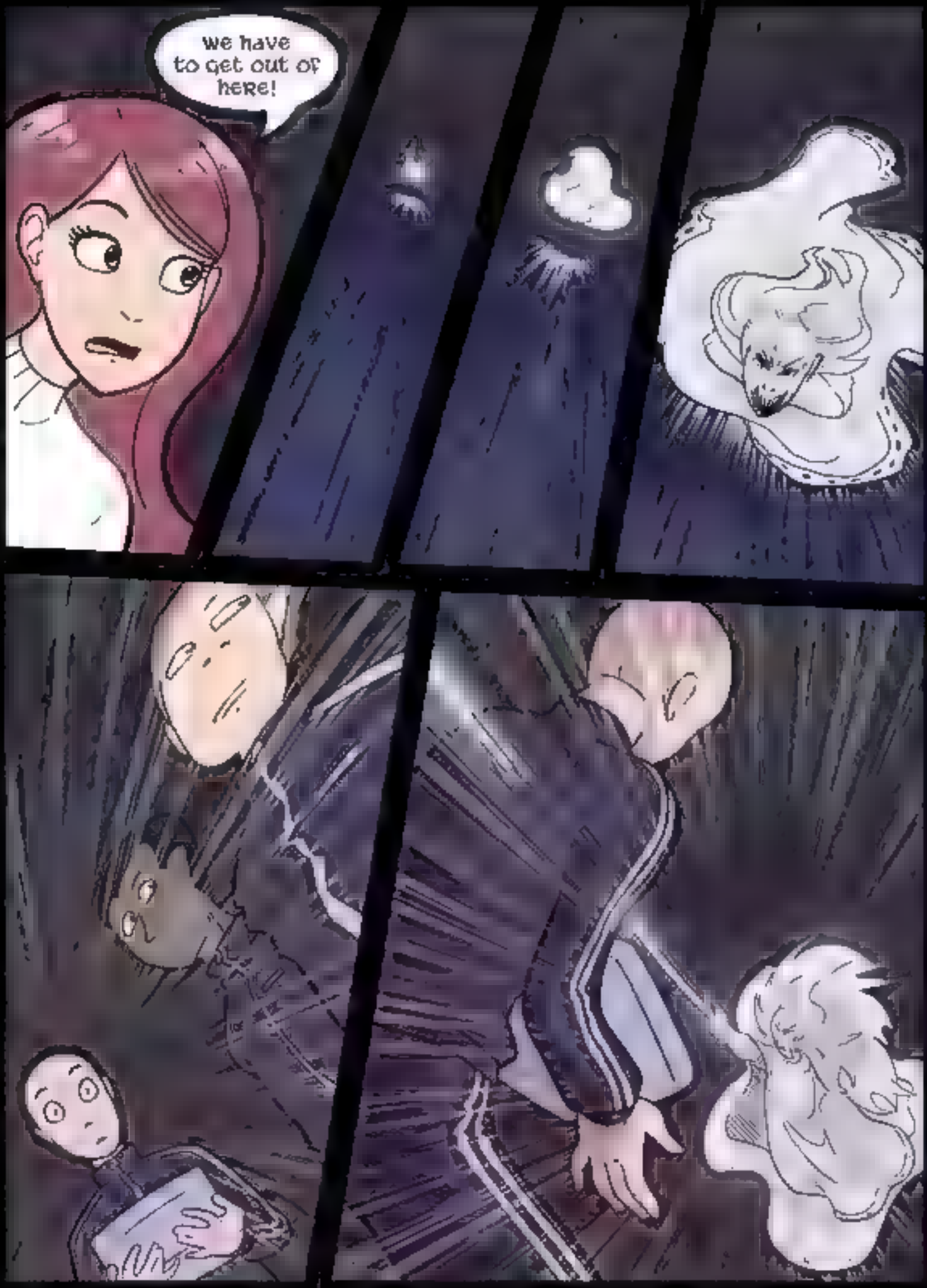
did you notice?
yes
the girl with black hair seems to be the first to notice the way forward.
she looks a little like
zimmy, yes.
let's see where she takes us.

Jerrek slipped by us amongst all the new faces, and we should not let that happen again
hmm..
maybe kat knows who she is?
hi, kat, are you there?
hey
um... any update on our location?
let's see...
...
hey, you're all the way out where the bridge used to be!
how'd you get there so fast?

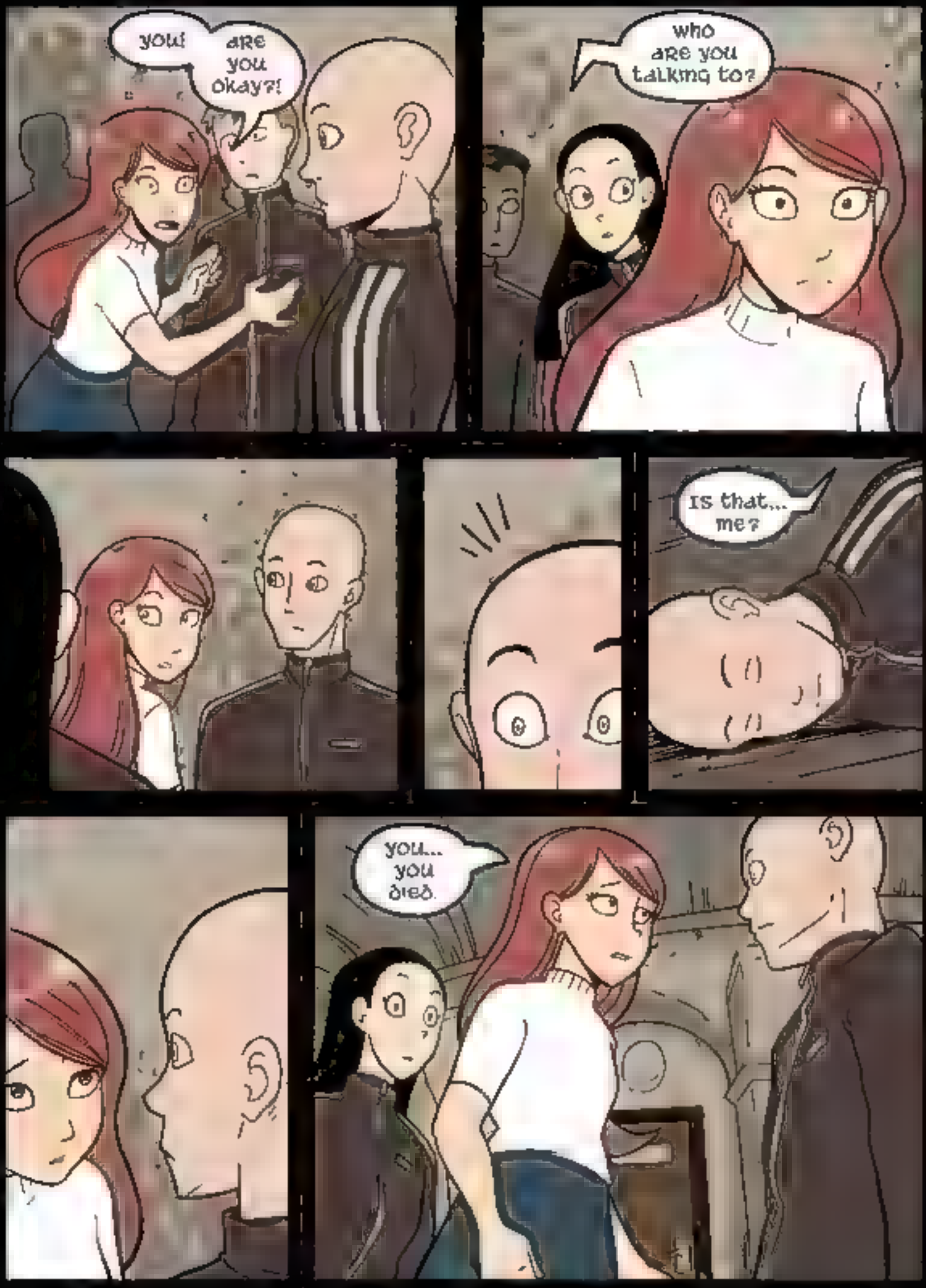
So you [redacted] when you met with that person from the new world?
They said something about travelling through space metaphorically?
Oh, yeah... you think that's what's happening here?
It could be. We're finding areas based on memories and familiarity, but we also seem to be physically moving there.

what the...
kat, I have to go!
no!

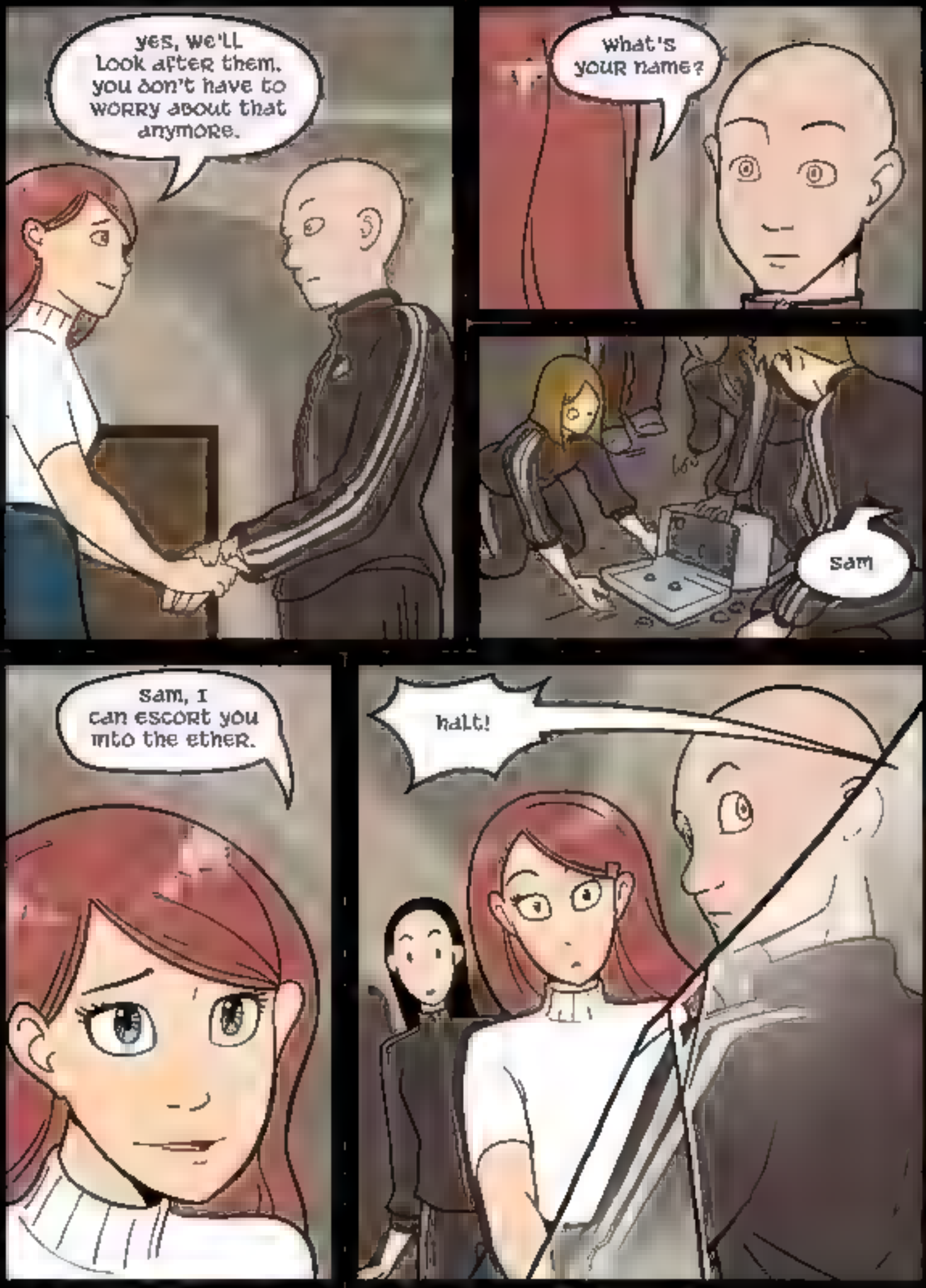
wait, this is
the arnan waters!


we have to get out of here!

oh no..
I caused this by remembering Jeanne...
what happened?

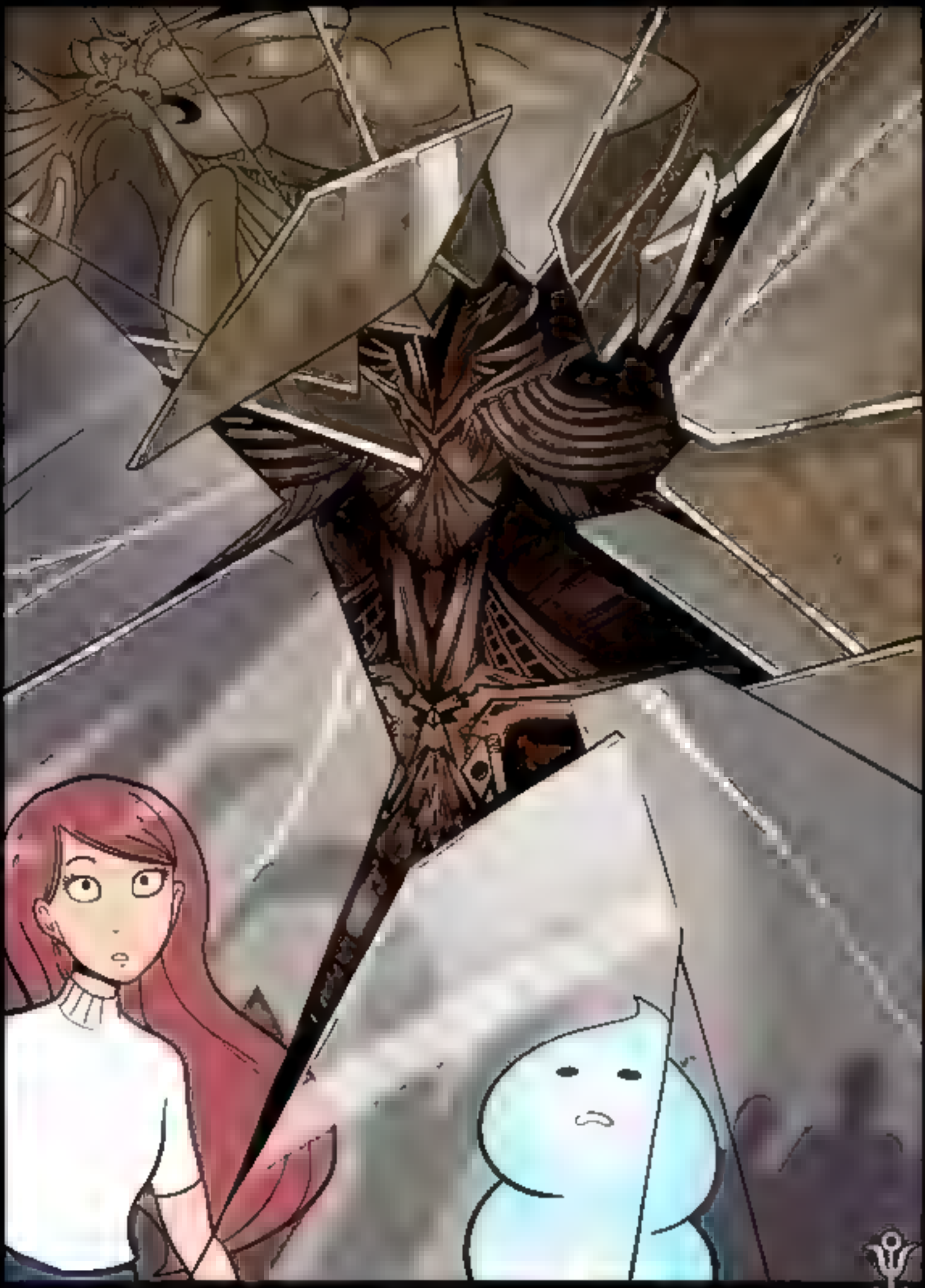

you! are you okay?!
who are you talking to?
is that... me?
you... you died.

It's been a while since I've seen something like this...
ah... you can see his ghost..
he's...dead?
I didn't know if this could even happen with the new people.
but Lana...
when coyote got her, I didn't see anything.
so she might still be alive?
I'm so sorry this happened to you.
the cpu chips .. are they safe?


yes, we'll look after them. you don't have to worry about that anymore.
what's your name?
sam
sam, I can escort you into the ether.
halt!

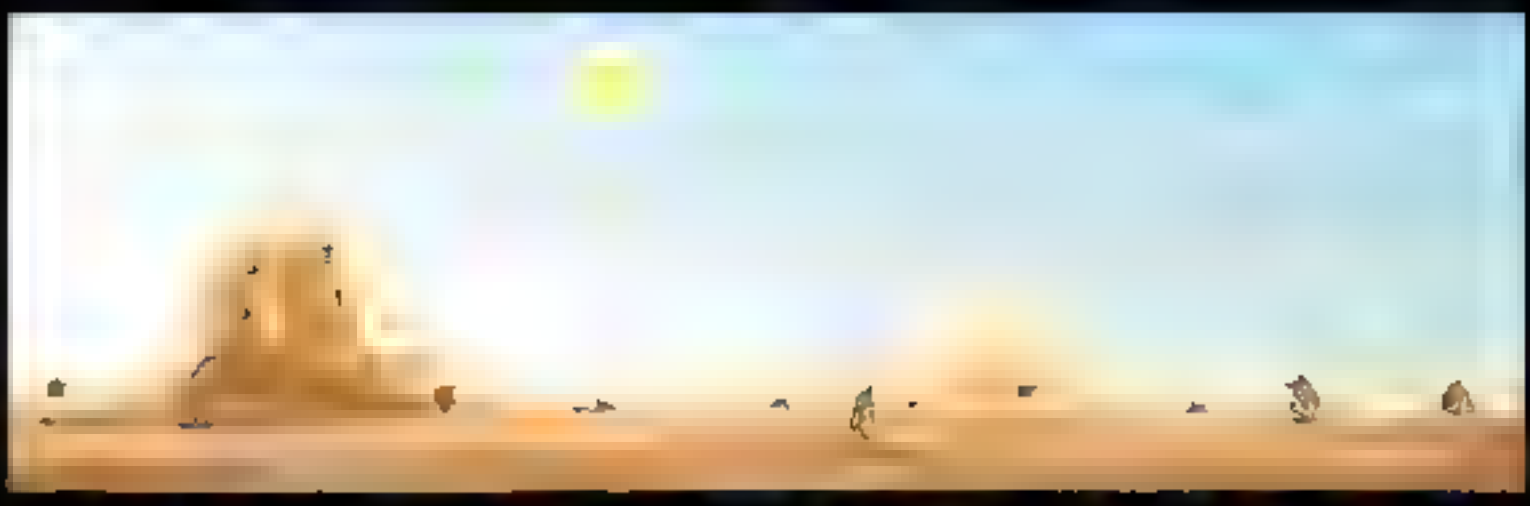
and.. helper ghost.
arbiter Saslamel!
Interpreter!
I had a feeling I'd see you again!

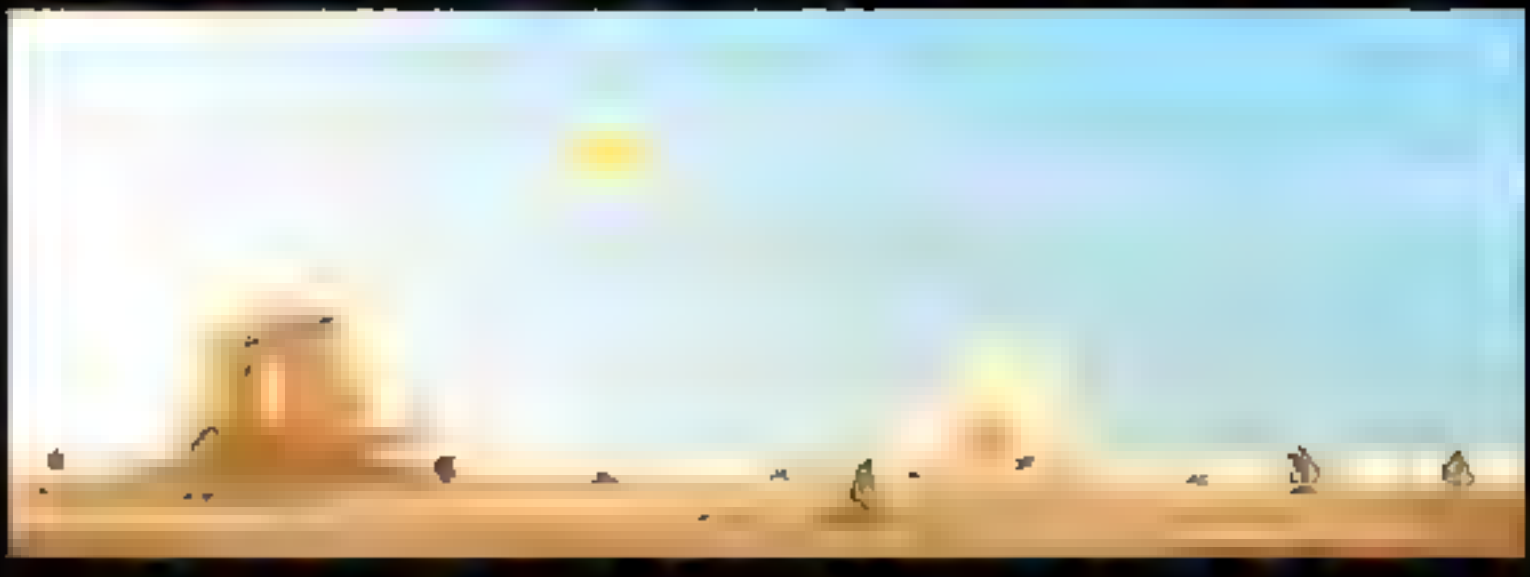
I know you psychopomps are eager to claim souls, and we're usually happy to let you fight it out amongst yourselves, but we really must intervene here.
as this is the first death for this type of creature, it must really be seen by the appropriate person.
but .. who—
wait, it can't be!
we call forth the keeper of this soul!



Summerbrigg Towel

Riddle Quest





Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 92:

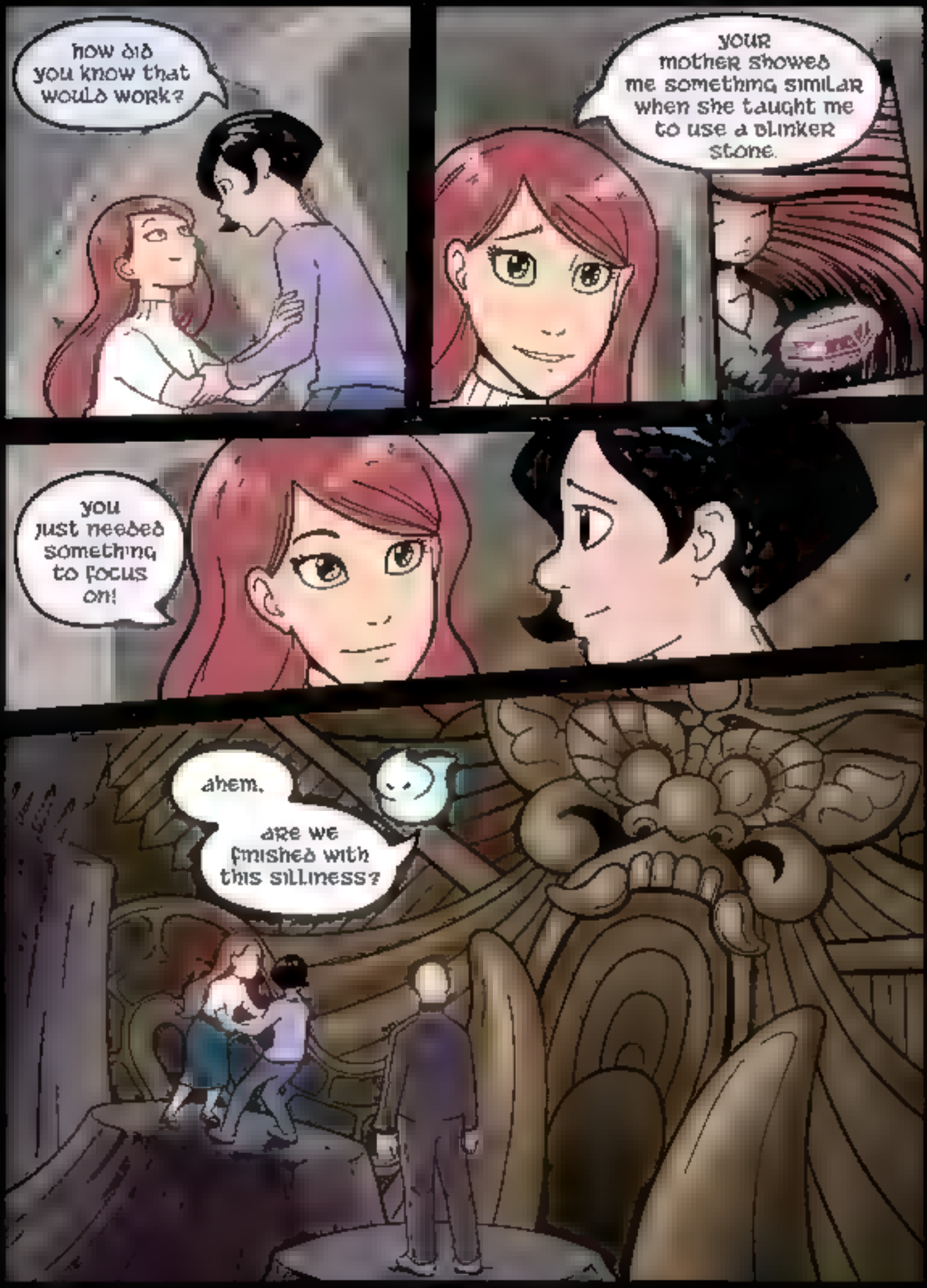
The World Is A Dead Thing

what
is
this?!

this isn't the person we talked to last time!
It is!
I've seen this before!
a - annie?!
kat!
what's going on?!
everything's going crazy!

you need to concentrate!
you're being called by the arbiter!
that guy?!
w - why?!
just focus on my voice!
try to picture me in your mind!
I - I can't!
try this!

how did . I ~ I saw you!
this is what it's like to look into the ether.
kat! thank goodness.
annie


how did you know that would work?
your mother showed me something similar when she taught me to use a blinker stone.
you just needed something to focus on!
ahem.
are we finished with this silliness?

Katerina Donlan, you are contractually bound to the spirits belonging to the present creature
am I?
on the event of their death, you are responsible for their conveyance into the ether.
wait . their death?
oh, buddy. what happened?
I was killed by a ghost, I think.
but if you're the first ..
I thought you said Lana...
we're still figuring things out

so, let me guess.
the contract I agreed to has some small-print about me being responsible for the new people's souls?
amongst other things, yes!
I really should have read that whole thing...
amateur mistake.
does this make kat a psychopomp?
not exactly!
if you wish, you may take the souls into the ether yourself, or you may outsource the task to an existing guide
but you must make the choice.
I warn you; arguments of ownership often spring from improperly choosing a representative.

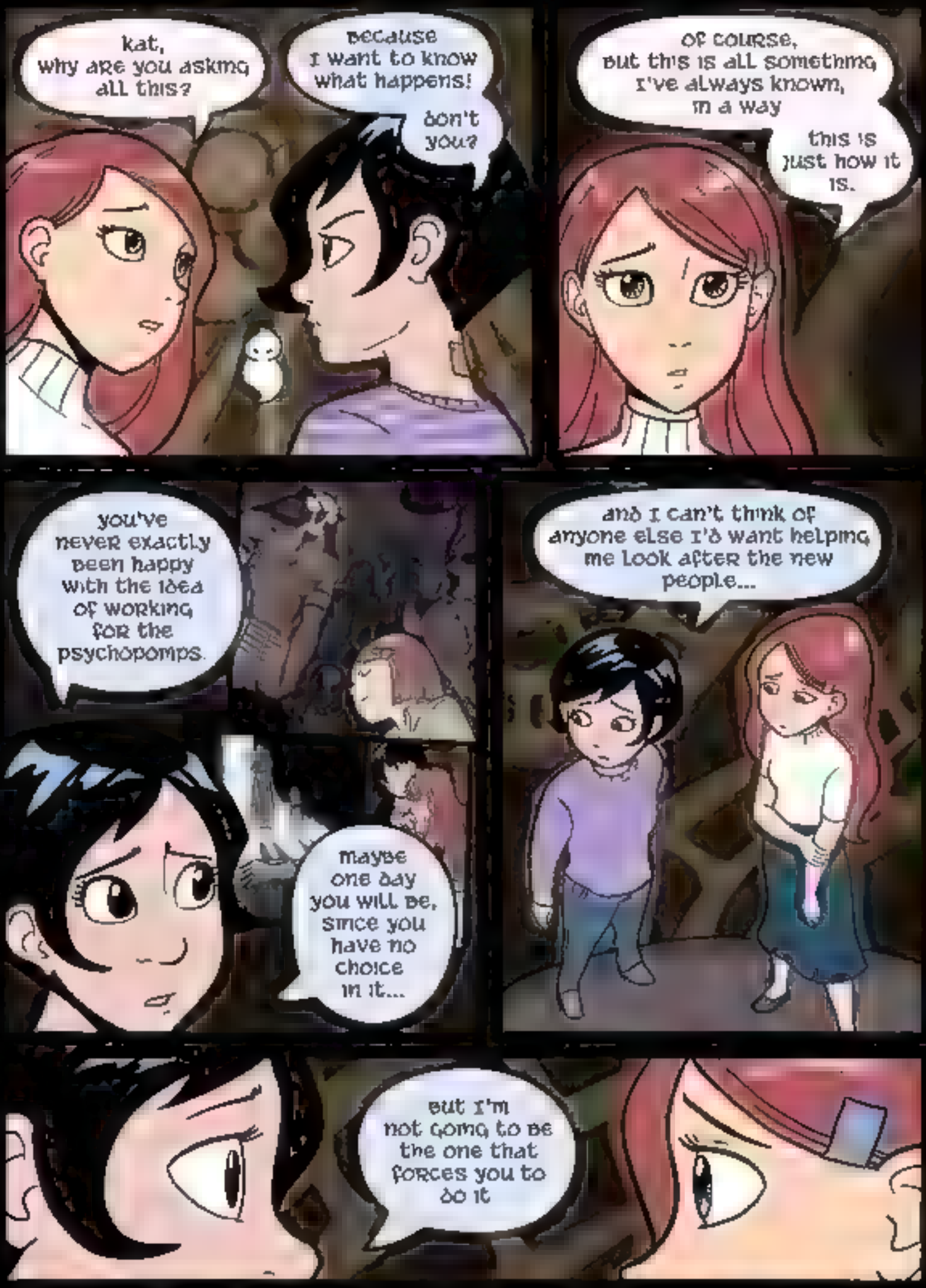
what is all this for?
pardon?
the guides. ownership. escorting a soul into the ether.
why?
what's the point?
the point?
the world is a dead thing.
filled with nothing.

the ether is the life of the world.
it began small a spark.
a fire grew. envelopes the world. the ether is this fire.
the ether transforms changes. makes the dead alive.
the ether is shared. a vast ocean of life. taken from. added to.
the ether is also changed. strained through life. returned more powerful.

so the ether is kinda like a source of energy that gets stronger when it's used?
no wonder the court wants it
but, the psychopomps, and this business about ownership, what's that about?
the guides ensure the ether is diverted back to where it belongs.
so it is not left to languish,
or at risk from those who would misuse it.
ghosts, trapped souls, the eternally lost.
there are departments that help put this energy to use, but even they cannot find them all.
that must be the rots.

left alone, the memory of them fades, and so does the power of the ether.
then, they are as nothing. a waste.
now, antimony carver. you rushed to claim this soul.
no I didn't, I just happened to be here!
katerina donlan, do you designate antimony to be the permanent guide for these creatures?
wait, wait, I'm not finished!
if I did pick annie, would she officially be a psychopomp?
yes.
and then?
what happens to annie?

this is not our department, but we gather she will be endowed with the abilities of an afterlife guide.
so she'll get special powers or something?
the afterlife guides are a respected group, honoured for their dedicated service and solemn duty
"special powers" is a glib reduction of their station.
stop avoiding the question! what happens to her?
she will exist in a sphere outside that of mortals. away from the confines of the physical world.
are you saying she'll die?
no, the guides are living creatures.
but they do not dwell amongst the living.


kat, why are you asking all this?
because I want to know what happens! don't you?
of course, but this is all something I've always known, in a way
this is just how it is.
you've never exactly been happy with the idea of working for the psychopomps.
and I can't think of anyone else I'd want helping me look after the new people...
maybe one day you will be, since you have no choice in it...
but I'm not going to be the one that forces you to do it

In the future, no matter where we are in our lives, I'd be honoured to take this burden from you.
Let's see how the rest of our lives go first.
But sure, I'll think about it
until then, I'll do it.
With your help.
You got that? I'm not making an official choice right now.
I see, I see.
This is acceptable
however...

the arbiter has only appeared this time to assign responsibility
he will not appear again until you are ready to make a choice.
as such, you will not have access to the tools and skills afforded an afterlife guide.
the next time one of these "new people" dies, you will have to find them on your own merit, or their essence will indeed languish
or perhaps fall victim to a fate worse than death.
I'll figure it out.

sorry to keep you waiting, buddy.
kat, the fact that sam is here now, and about to be brought into the ether, is proof that the new people really are something special.
well, gee, thanks, annie
thank you, angel!
I watched you develop their bodies over the years and you truly created something more than the sum of their parts.
now, at the end of their lives, they enter into the fabric of the world.
the collective consciousness of all things.

do you have any parting words?
just . I hope I did a good job.
first, inspecting water pipes, and now as a person
that's it.
you did great, sam.

weird.
he had no idea who he was.
that always happens.
how do you feel?
... I don't know.
sounds about right.
hey, guy can I get a copy of that contract I agreed to?
that is a perfectly sensible request
BLIP

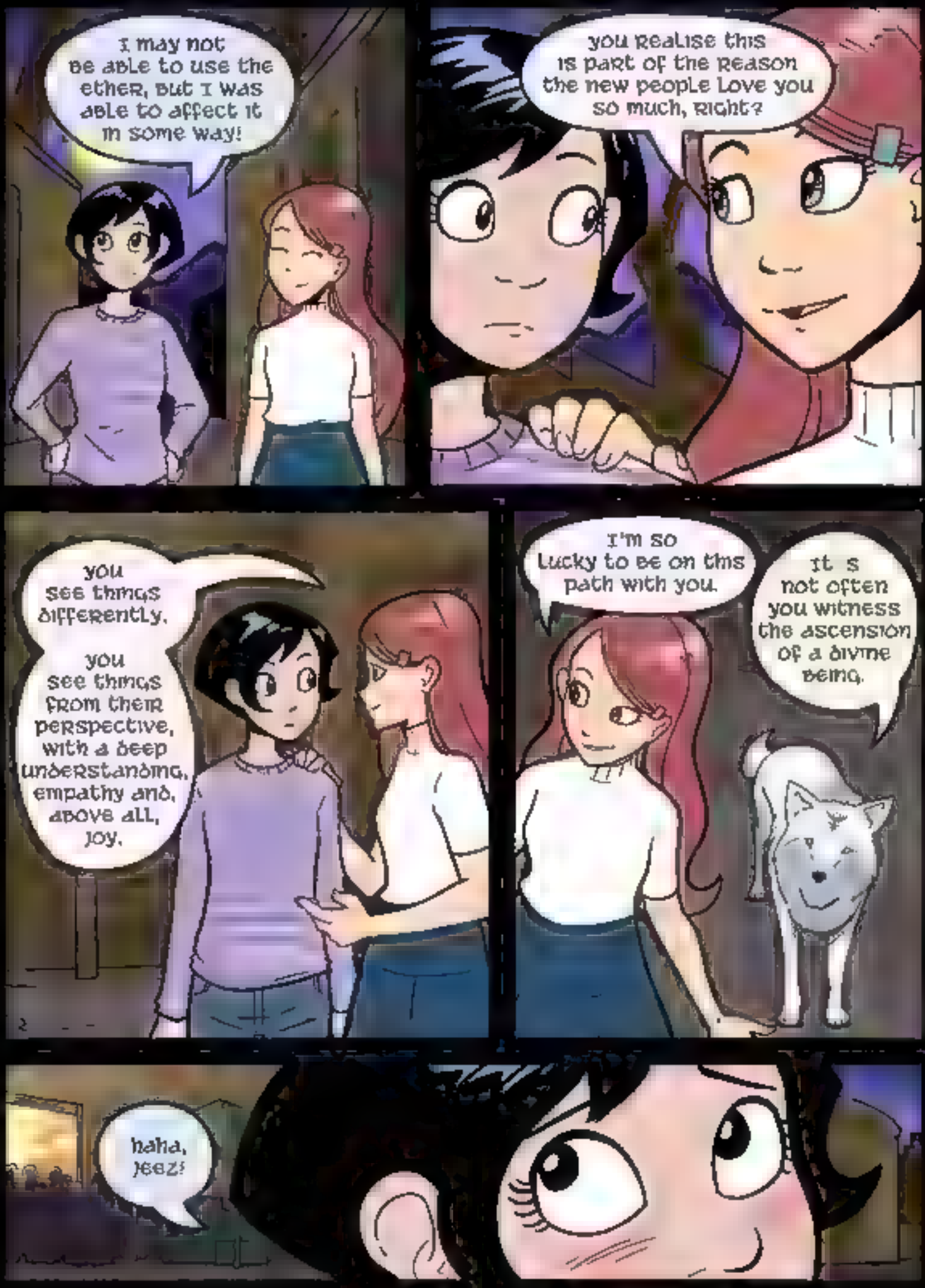
So, what now?
Now, Saslamel and I will depart.
We await your decision.
I'm being sent back!
!
Don't worry, I think I know how to get to you!

Wha... did something just happen?!
yes, kat was called forth to help with sam's ghost.
What?! I didn't see anything!
the angel was here?!
she visited upon death?
she came for sam.

so sam is really ..
we'll carry his body back to the angel
but how do we
I think I have it
I just need you to think of your angel, and the place you were born in your new bodies
yes, of course...
the beginning of our lives...

angel, we understand sam is no longer with us, but we wanted to return his body.
the greatest gift you gave him.
his only true posession
his very being.
no...
I may have made this body, but it was his mind that made him sam.
things are kinda messed up right now, but I know my friend, anne will sort things out.
in the meantime, let's do something to remember him.

annie, I don't think I agree with the arbiter
the world isn't a dead thing.
that would make the ether something separate from the rest of the world.
call it what you want, I guess. but imagination, thought, the ether, that's just as much a part of the world as rocks and stones and whatever.
the robots were alive in my mind before I made these new bodies. but I don't really respect that
I didn't give it much thought.
I didn't do much more than make them seem more alive to people like the arbiter.
but I'm happy with that.


I may not be able to use the ether, but I was able to affect it in some way!
you realise this is part of the reason the new people love you so much, right?
you see things differently.
you see things from their perspective, with a deep understanding, empathy and, above all, joy.
I'm so lucky to be on this path with you.
it's not often you witness the ascension of a divine being.
haha, jeez!

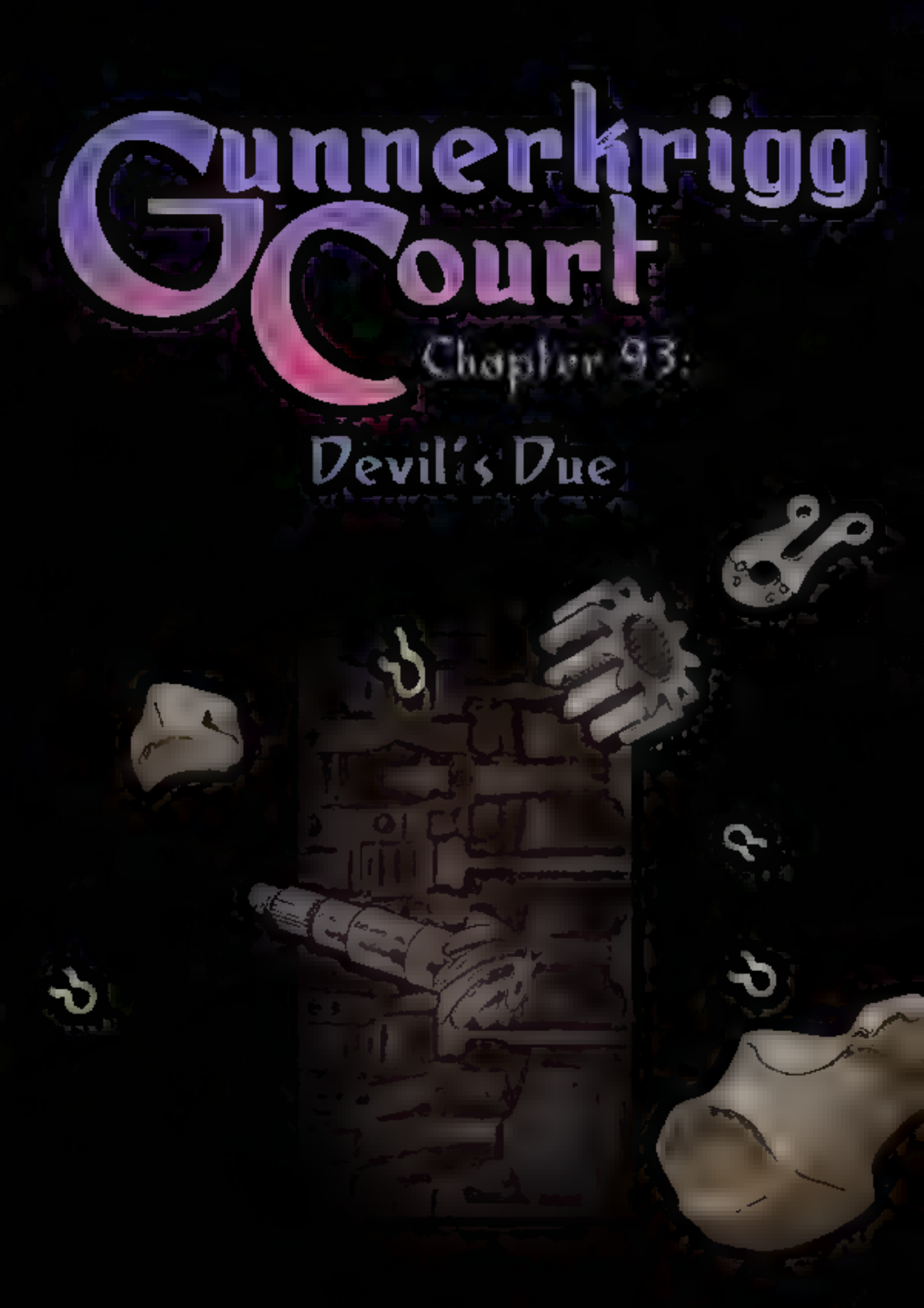
kat...
yeah, you have to get going.
but, after what happened to sam
I want you to be careful.
who knows what's out there?
we will
and we know how to get back here.
we just need think of the angel!
haha! come on!

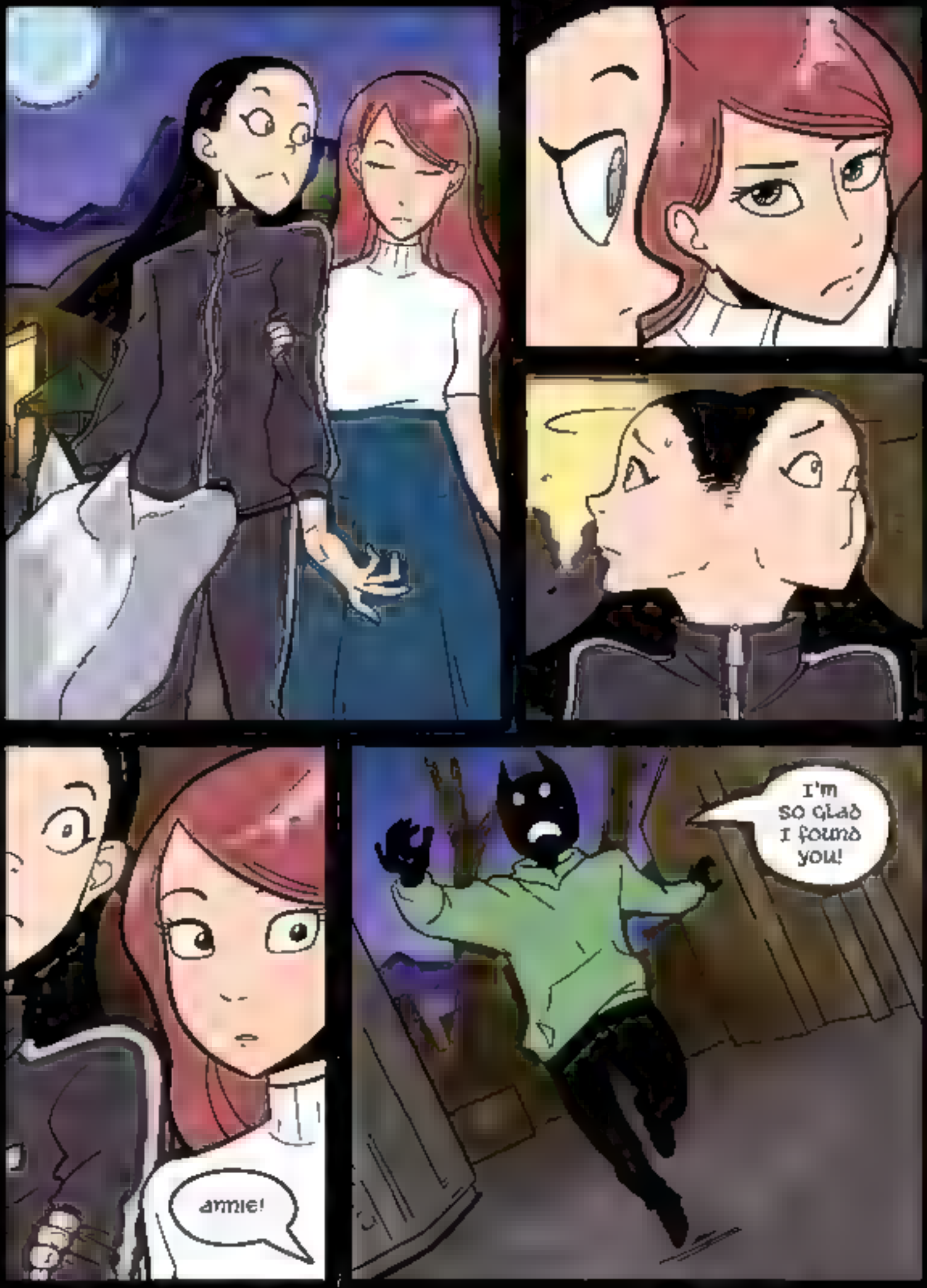
Okay, just who are you?

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 93:

Devil's Due



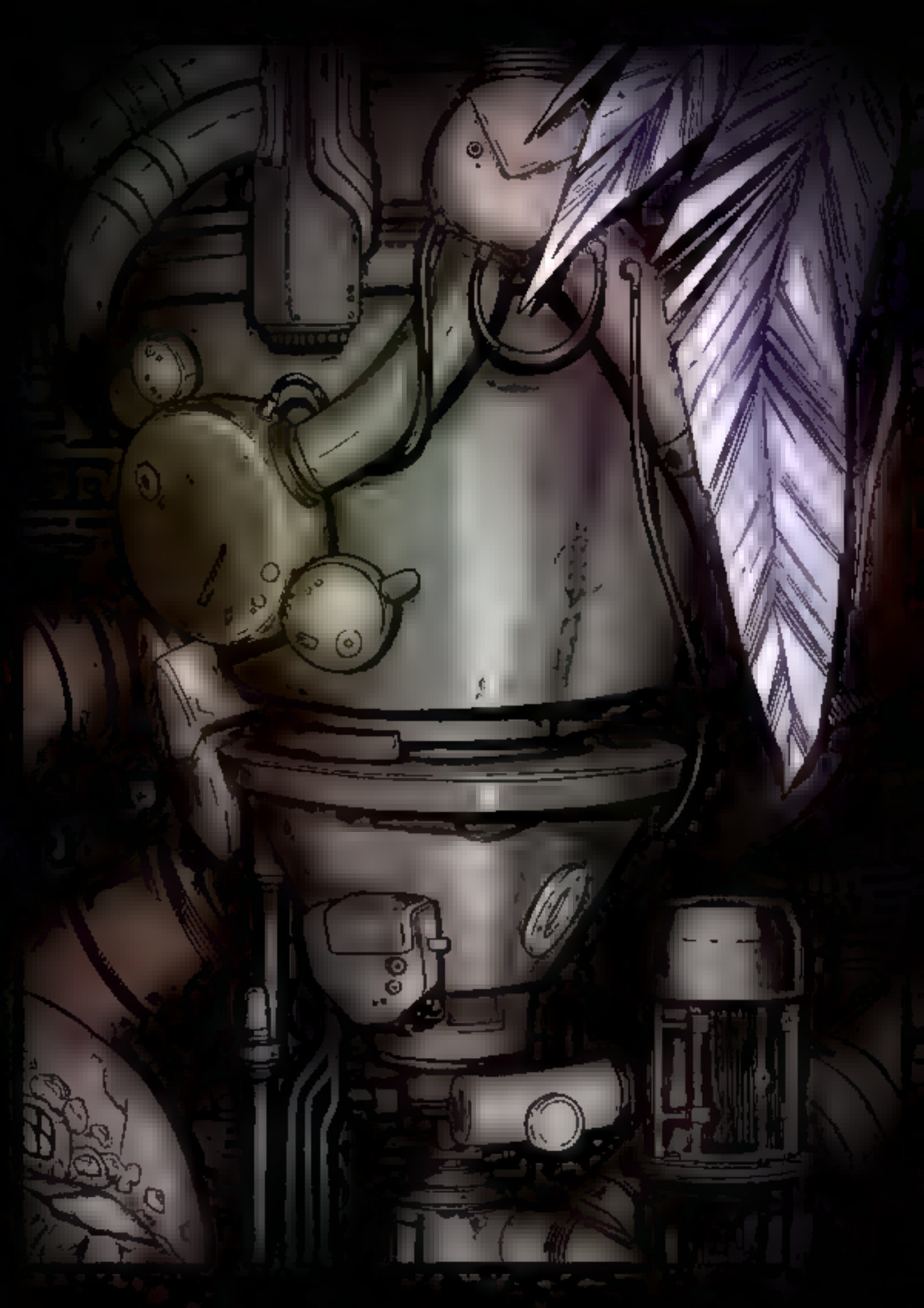

annie!
I'm so glad I found you!

shadow!
what ~

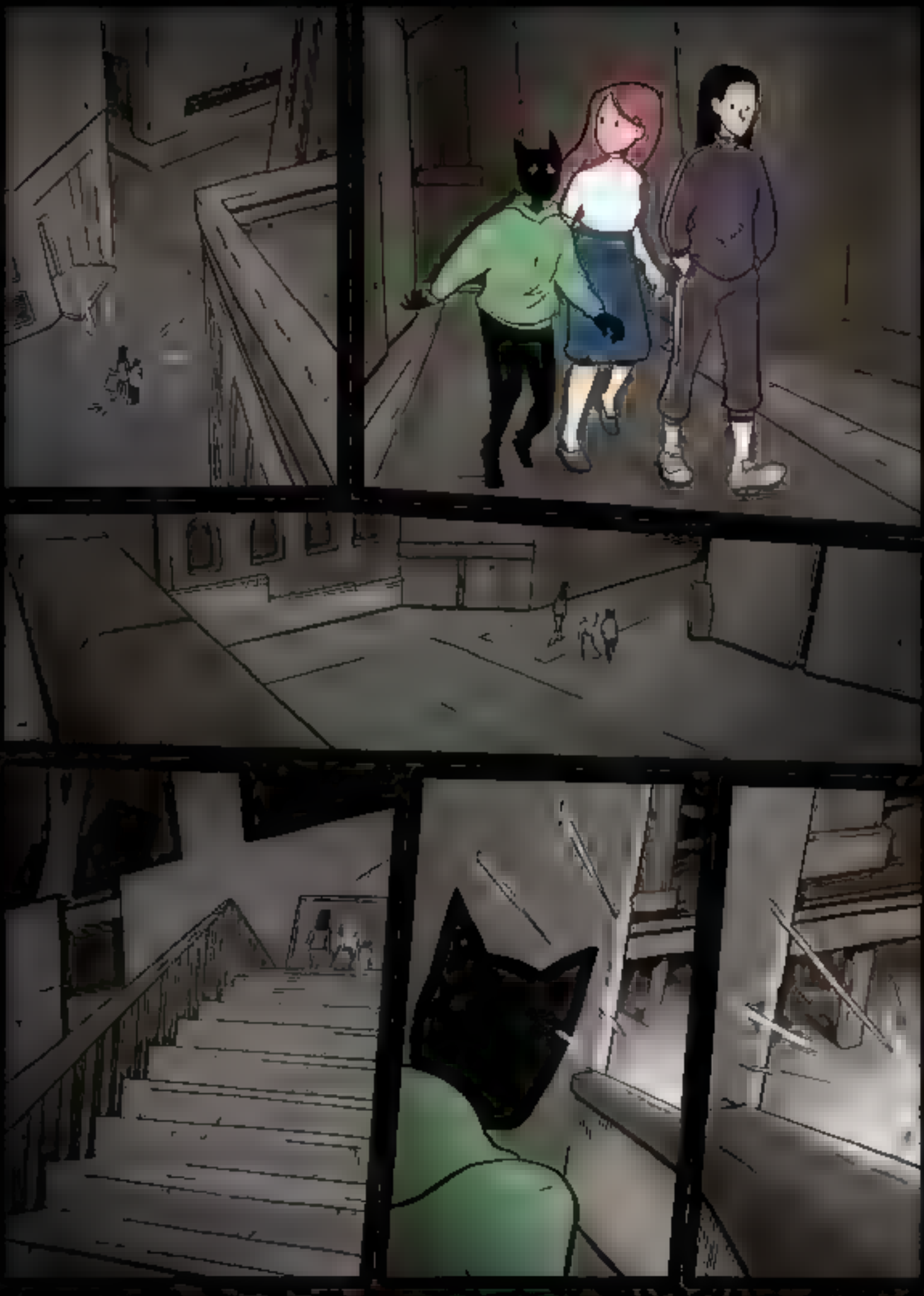
annie, what ~
let go!
Wa!~~
OWW

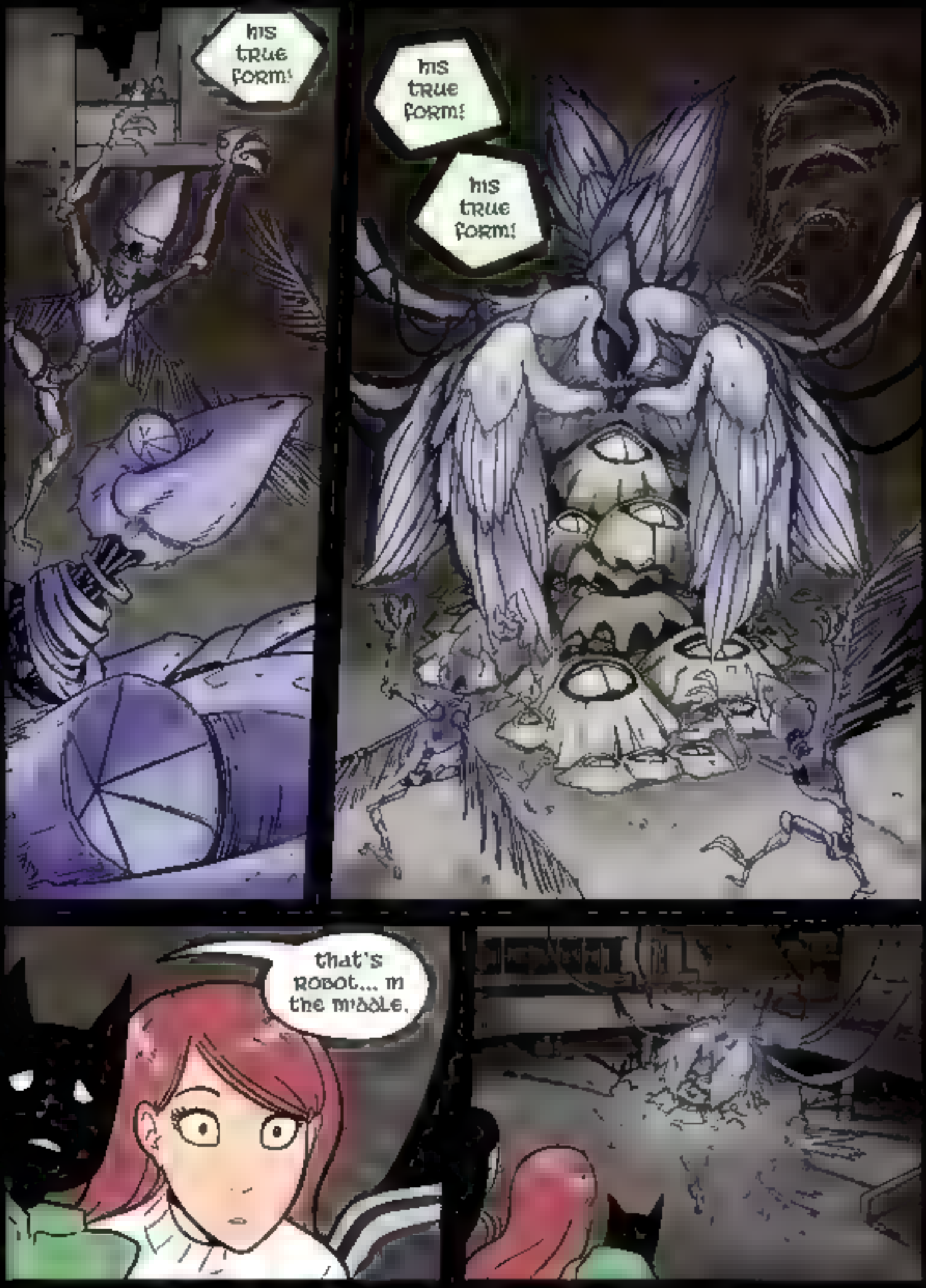
BWIP
Will you stop that?!
I want to help my friend!

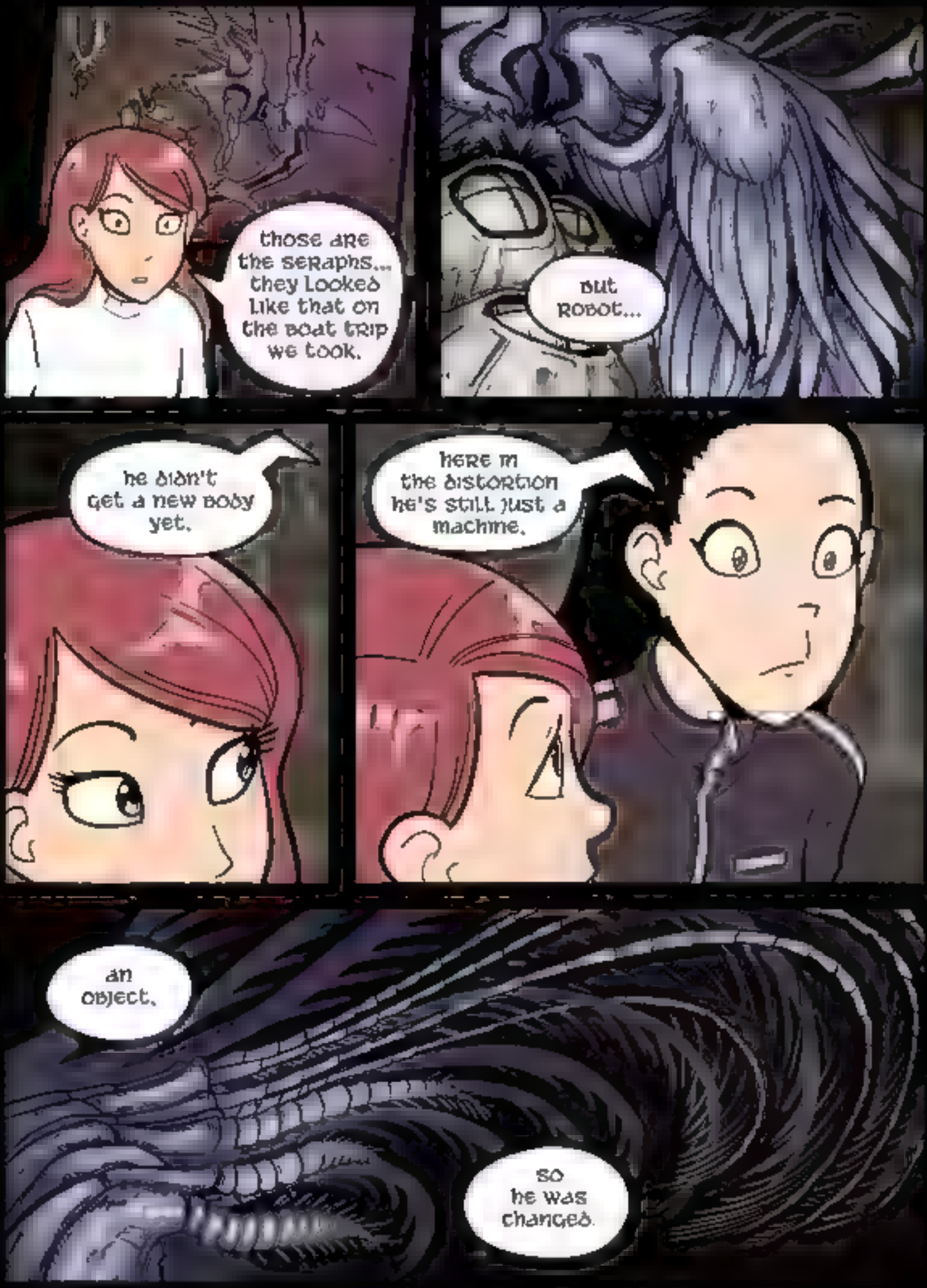
Shadow! What happened?
don't worry about her.
R-robot... something happened to him.
he-he changed!
where is he?
I don't know! I was with him... then I tried to find you...
and now...
I know where he is



where the devil are you?!
shadow and I were warped away by this girl.
but we have to check in on robot. are you okay where you are?
yes, yes. go do what you must
if this girl is some manifestation of zimmy, she might be useful in all this.
my thoughts exactly.




his true form!
his true form!
his true form!
that's robot... in the middle.


those are the seraphs... they looked like that on the boat trip we took.
but robot...
he didn't get a new body yet.
here in the distortion he's still just a machine.
an object.
so he was changed.

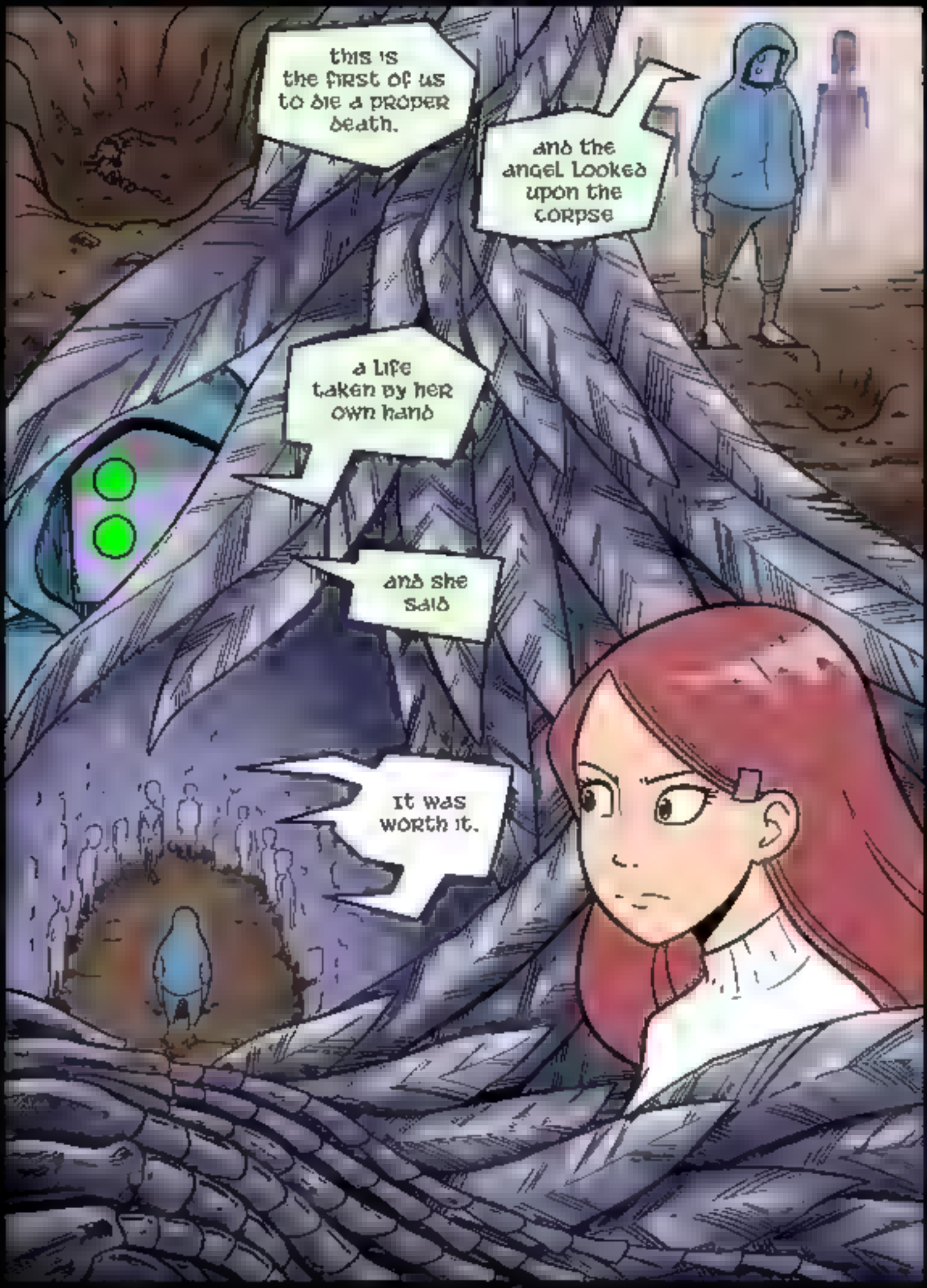
annie, who is this?
that's a good question, shadow.
how do you know all this?
...
can you do anything to help?
no.
then I'll deal with you later

subject carver!
subject carver!
see the deceiver
look at his true form!
he led us into exile!
a liar!
a liar!

Look what he has reduced us to!
enough!
Robot.
are you in there?
oh
oh, antimony...
don't look at me...
don't let shadow see me like this!

robot...
I'm here...
ah! no...
this is my penance...
what are you.
I want to see

a beautiful angel.
what if I told you I know of a place an angel watches over a shrine?
let it be known
in this tomb of ancients, the angel called forth the spirit of the dead.
you see how easily she gave life
and how easily she took it away.
I... I remember this.


this is the first of us to die a proper death.
and the angel looked upon the corpse
a life taken by her own hand
and she said
It was worth it.

once the ship is at the appointed location, you will activate the ether syphons and present the growth tank.
huh?!
the creator hates us now!
she will never forgive us!
it is our love for her that makes us act in strange ways
but to this, what do we say?
it was worth it
oh, robot

you knew what the seraphs were going to do on the boat trip?
It was his plan!
he would interfere to make the angel push her work forward!
I... I didn't know about that!
I knew Robot was acting weird... but I trusted him..
was I wrong to do that?
oh... Shadow

hey, robot. why don't you have a new body yet?
not until I was ready
when all the other robots had gone before me,
yes, even my seraph brothers,
I would request a body.
I would allow my mind to be filtered through the transfer process.
and then..
through her all seeing wisdom, my evil deeds would be discovered by the angel.

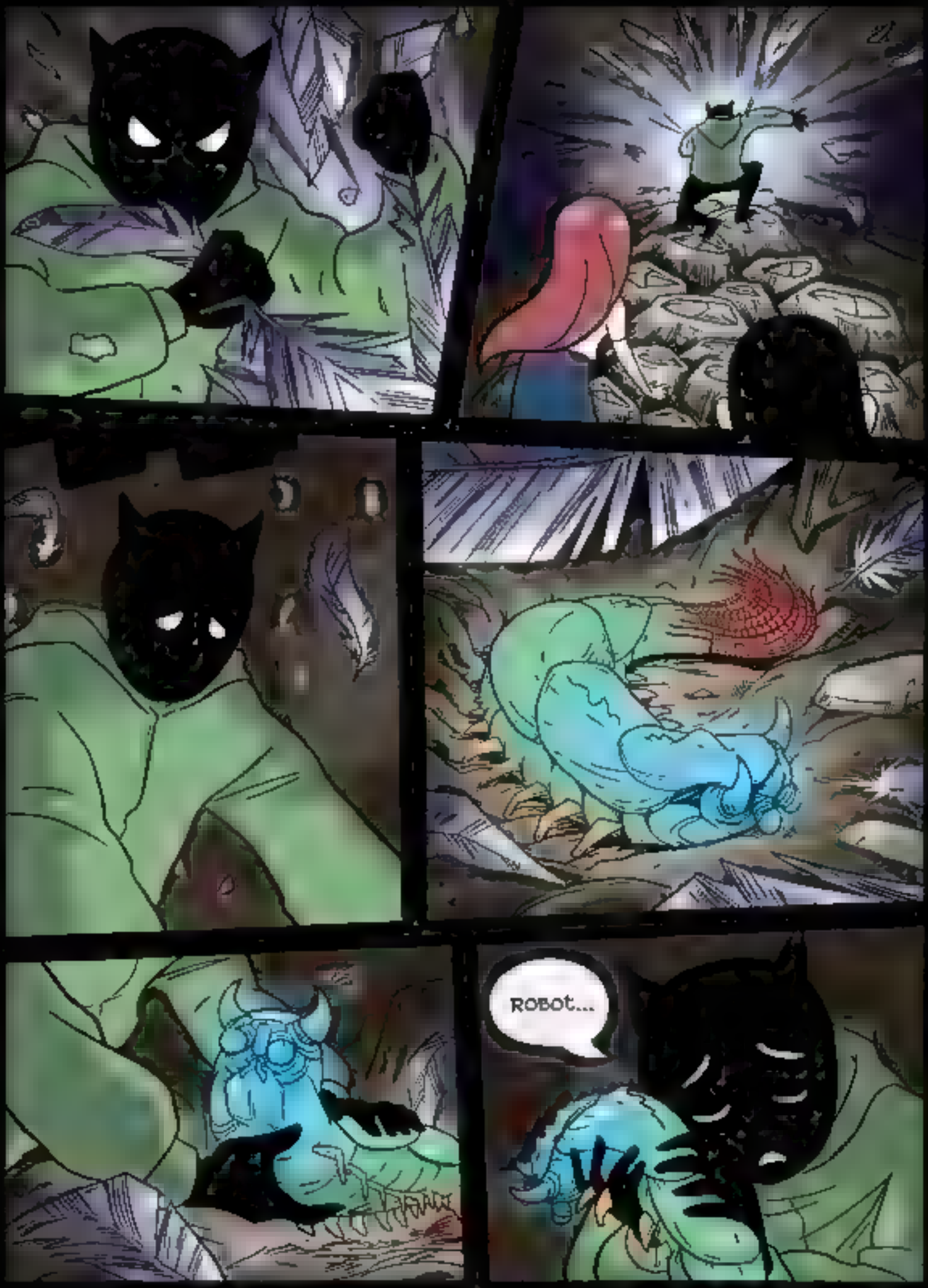
what I had done.
my deceit.
my evil nature.
I would be put on trial for my crimes.
there would be no choice but to punish me.
to terminate me.
what?!
but such a small price.
ROBOT!
for the ascension of my fellow robots...
to give my life in exchange?
indeed, it would be worth it.

It was to be a burden I could carry on my synthetic frame.
what weight is shame, to a robot?
just performing my function.
but I did not expect...
the feeling when I looked at my beloved shadow...
to know the things I had done. the disappointment it would cause
how does my love multiply my shame in this way?!
the longer I hid my crimes, the more time I had with the one I love.

until, eventually, when my time comes, I would be brought before the angel and my mind laid bare.
I would be the first of us to be put to death.
the first of the new people to die.
oh. um
robot, a new person has already died..
oh.
no. no...
my selfishness has left me undone

ROBOT, THIS IS BESIDES THE POINT!
KAT WOULD NEVER ORDER YOU EXECUTED!
SHE'S GOING TO BE HEARTBROKEN BY WHAT YOU DID...
JUST AS I AM...
BUT THAT'S NO REASON .. NO REASON TO KILL YOU!
HOW COULD YOU THINK SUCH A THING?!
AND.. AND YOU CAN'T DO BAD THINGS AND JUSTIFY IT BY SAYING YOUR LIFE IS WORTHLESS!
THAT THAT IS SELFISH!

no! even my dear shadow has forsaken me!
hey!
don t put this on me!
grr!
robot! where are you?
i know you're in there!


ROBOT...

you're going to have to make up for what you did.
you have to tell kat, and everyone, and ask for their forgiveness.
it won't be easy.
but i'll be there with you.

S13, we see now you truly acted to help your fellow robots.
the angel was stirred to action through your devotion.
we will seek forgiveness from the angel as well
you guys need to calm down, too. stop acting so creepy all the time!
kat knows what she's doing.
yes... of course.

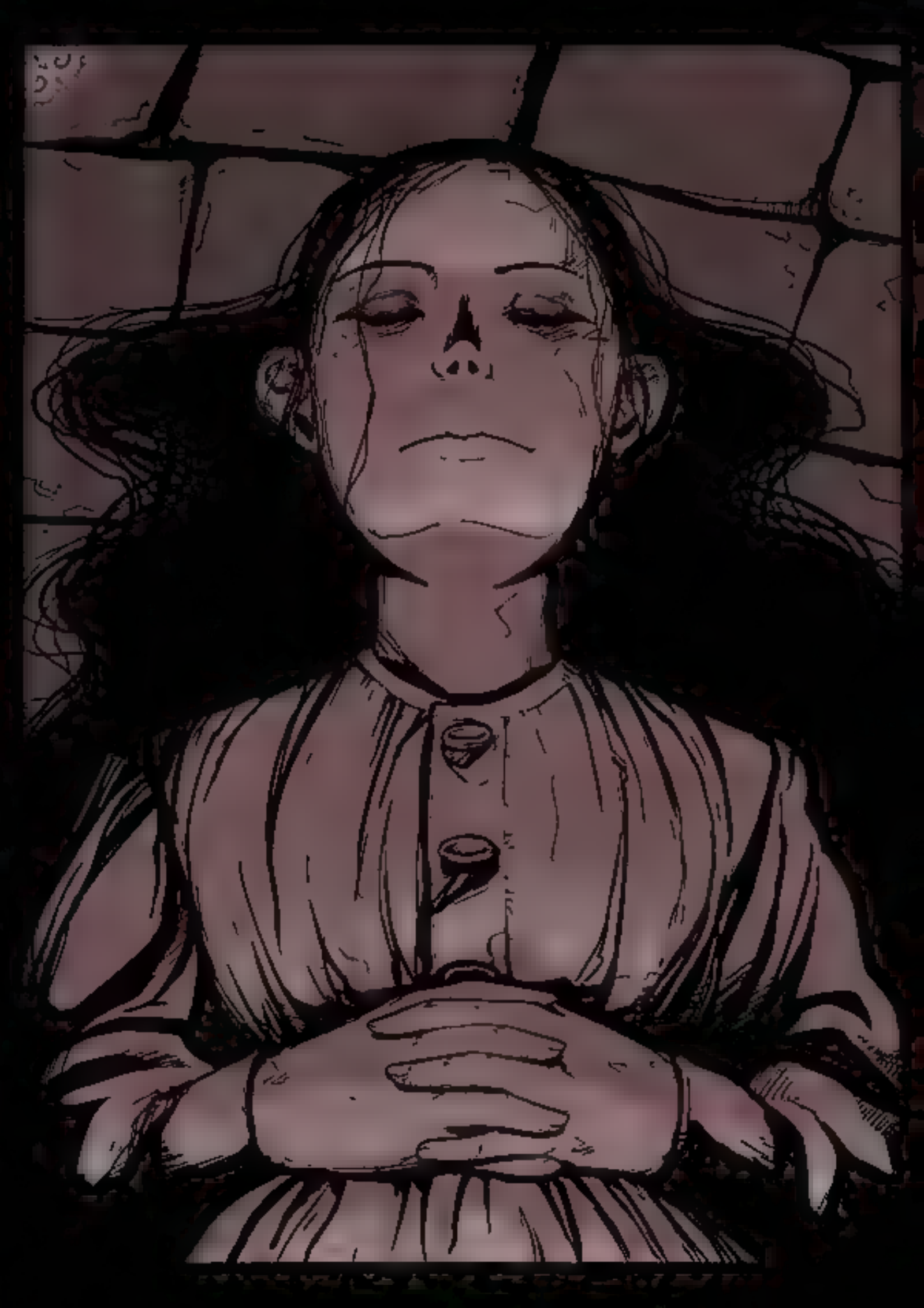
well. I should thank you for bringing us here and getting robot to open up.
you knew just what to ask.
but tell me, you are zimmy, aren't you? or a part of her?
huh?
no, I'm not zeta.

I am
omega.

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 94:

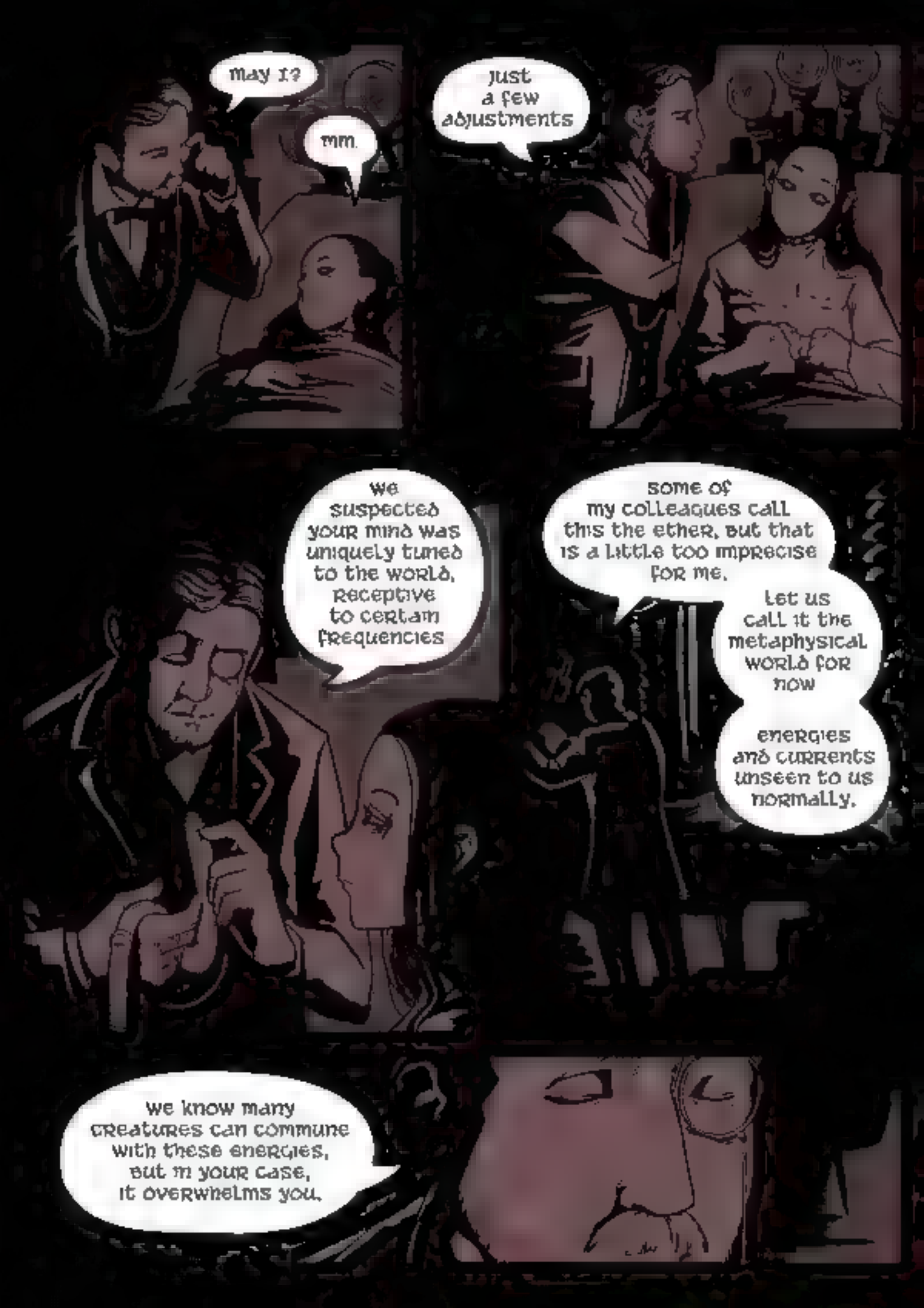
Omega



I have waited for you.
are you not afraid of me?
so it's true, you talk through the animals.
they may call you a witch, but my mind is not so closed.

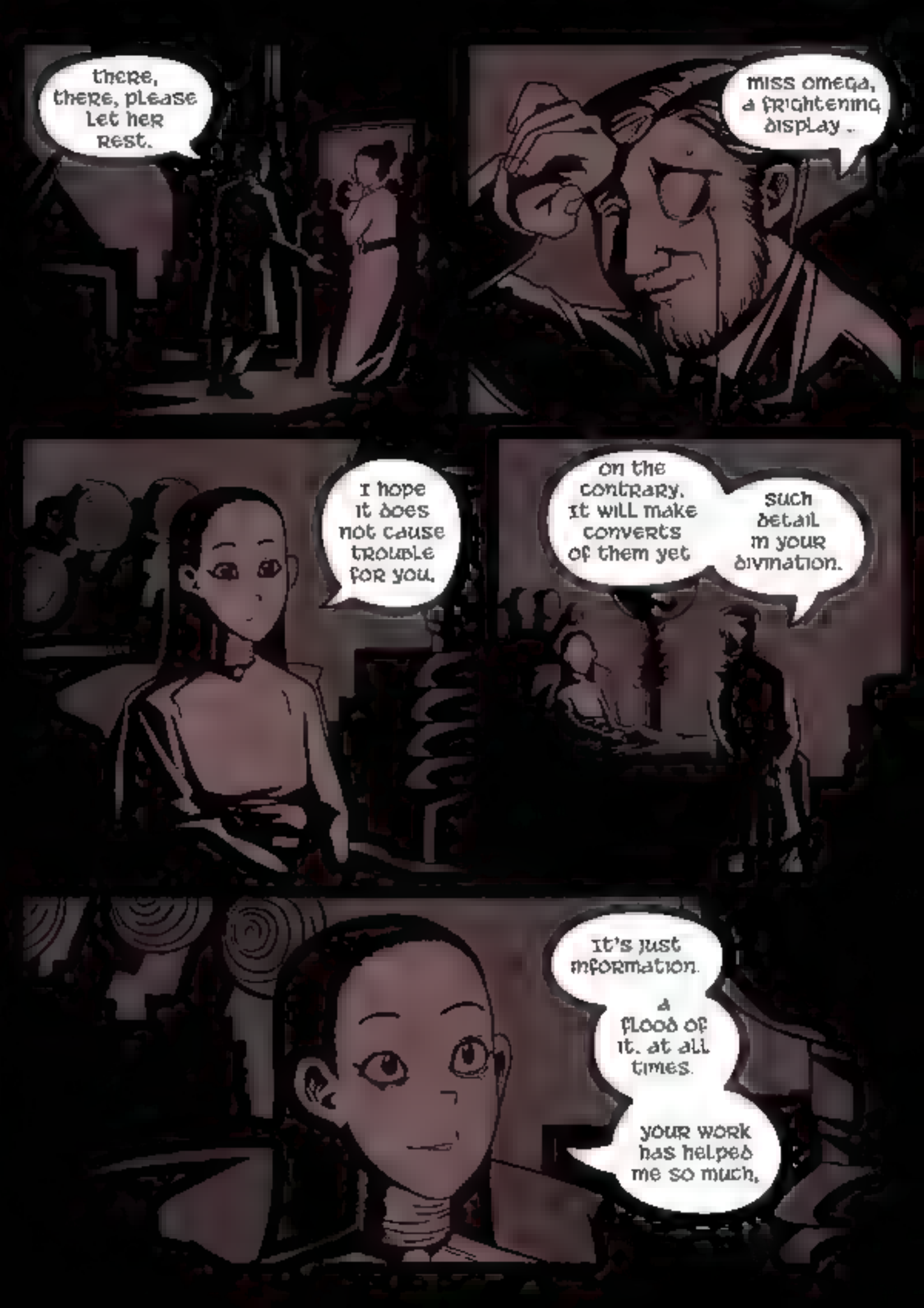
you are someone in great pain.
I knew you would understand.
then you also know I want to take you away.
please.

It has been a while since you last used your eyes yes?
We can bring one of your crows, if that's easier for you.
and your voice
mmm


may I?
mm.
just a few adjustments
we suspected your mind was uniquely tuned to the world, receptive to certain frequencies
some of my colleagues call this the ether, but that is a little too imprecise for me.
let us call it the metaphysical world for now
energies and currents unseen to us normally.
we know many creatures can commune with these energies, but in your case, it overwhelms you.

your mind must be a fog.
no, a lightning storm.
raging, without cease.
these shields I developed should provide a little relief, but I calculate it is only a slight reprieve
well. enough of my blather.
our work is just beginning.

you see, ladies and gentlemen, a perfect score.
ahem, if you will indulge me.
we have seen many examples of clairvoyance telepathy
I'm telling you, this is different
madam I know you carry a cigar in your reticule at all times
not because I read your mind, but because I saw you put it in there this morning.
it is the same brand you took from your father as a child. you found one rolled under a chair in his study.
you kept the original, hidden, in an old flower press, and then the pages of your journals.
it crumbled to dust, but the smell remained.
sir. before you entered the room you took note of the time on your pocket-watch.
a gift from your wife, who procured it outside the court.
the face is scuffed from a clumsy repair.
the night she gave it to you was the night you conceived your son. he lives in france.
you write to him weekly. you misspelled the word "ensign" in your last.
he reads your letters during breakfast
a cracked coffee cup.
silver salt shaker, near empty


there, there, please let her rest.
miss omega, a frightening display..
I hope it does not cause trouble for you.
such detail in your divination.
on the contrary. it will make converts of them yet
it's just information.
a flood of it. at all times.
your work has helped me so much.

I saw you, too, Charles.
as a boy, wailing under a pear tree.
as a young man, surrounded by books, lost in study.
I saw you come to the court and begin the work that led you to me.
I fell in love with that young man.
miss omega...
the information is there. I need but avail myself of it.
but - dear miss, I am older than you. how could you have seen me in my youth?
all I had to do was wait and I knew you would come.

please, my dear, it is too much. the human mind cannot store such information...
I can do more. your focusing amplifiers are working.
at what cost?
you are not able to leave this building... the treatments are ever more invasive.
without them, without you and the court, I would still by lying in the dirt, manipulating the simple minds of animals to do my bidding.
sweet woman...
together we have changed a curse into an invaluable tool....
and I know we can harness it further.

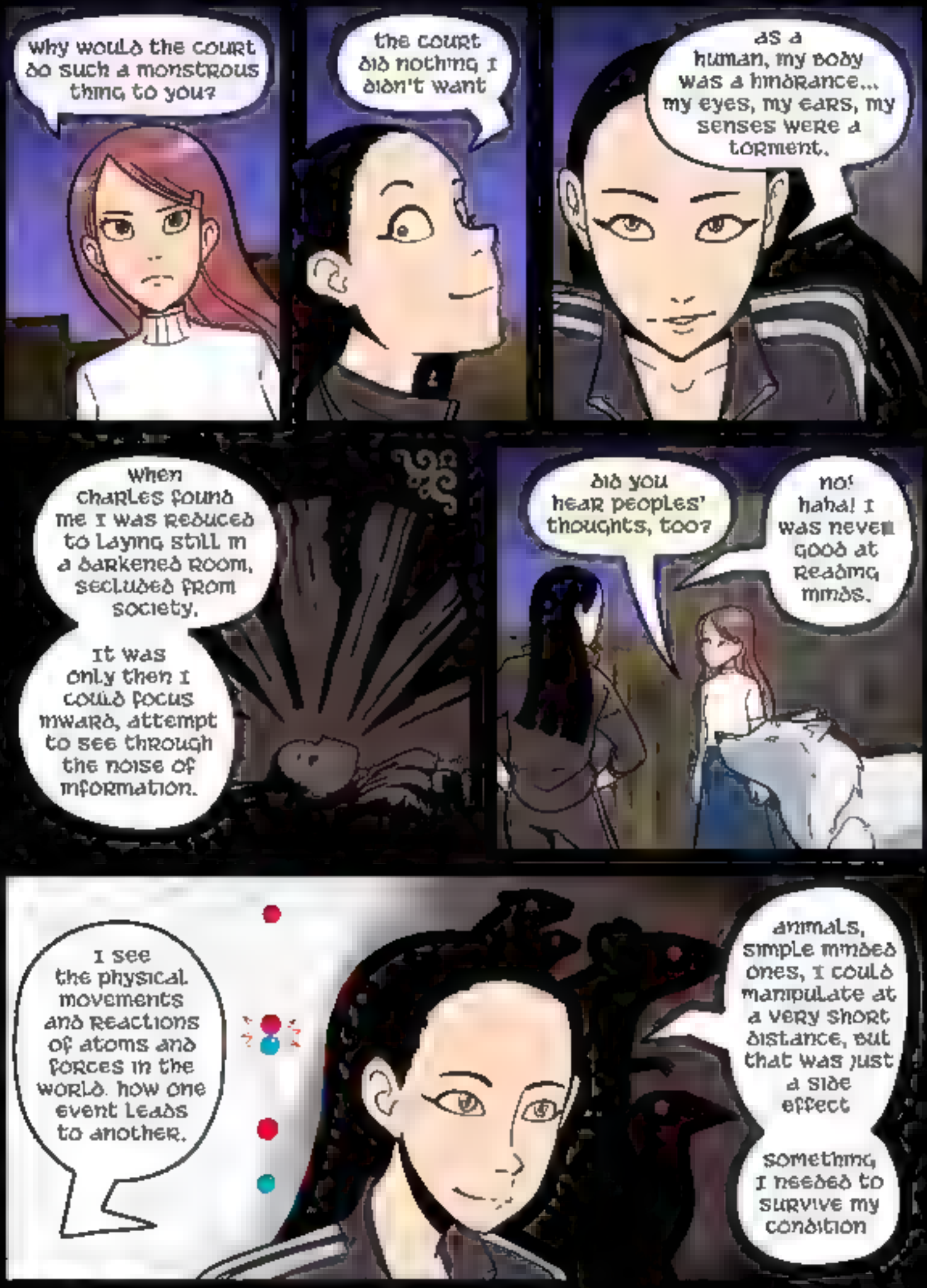
the results are returned.
a perfect prediction, once again.
I knew it.
the court is positively giddy with the possibilities.
we must do more
but there is something else...
be sure not to disclose this... but there will come a time when my predictions will become less and less accurate
there will be an event.
a girl...

omega. . please.
these next steps will be irreversible
you've seen the results, and you know this is what I want
this is the only way we can reach the event.
the girl who should not be

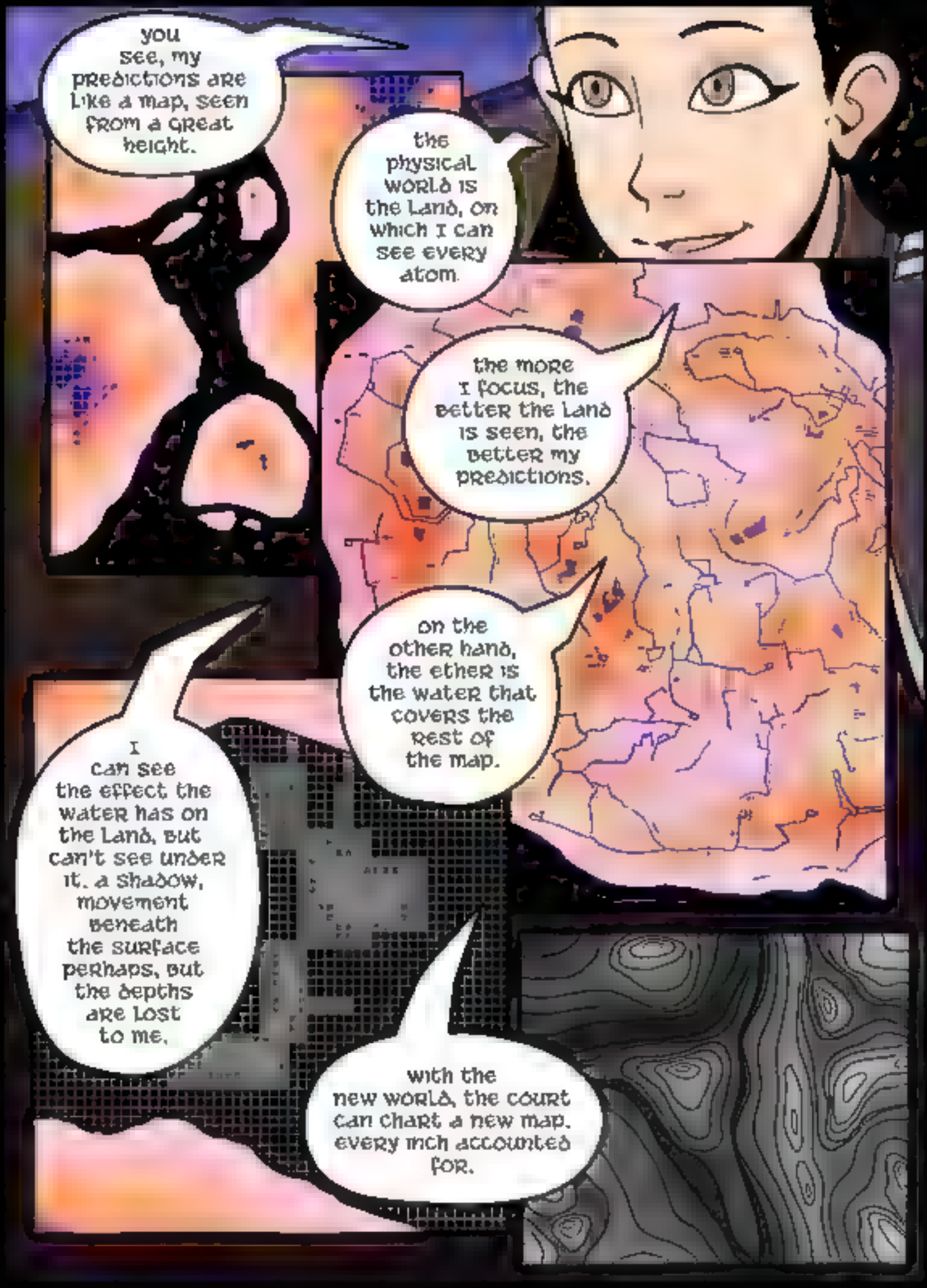
my dear. my heart. my life
with this last step, we finish our work.
my success is knowing you will outlive me and the court and everything else
our bodies may fail...
but your mind will continue.

you... are a machine?
and you can see the future?
as for the future... yes. I could see it
until the event.
more machine than human, now, yes.
my body has long since died, but the distortion allowed me to form a new one.
I'm sure you've guessed, you are the event
the girl that should not be

I predicted your death, antimony, a blip in a multitude of information.
you were to have had no further influence on the world.
but your friend, katerina, her work reaches even into the unknown. into the past and the future.
your very existence led to the events that should not have been.
led here... where I can walk on my own two feet as I never could.
I do not understand...
the distortion, renard.
It has blocked out the rest of the world from me
here, for now, I am free


Why would the court do such a monstrous thing to you?
the court did nothing I didn't want
as a human, my body was a hindrance... my eyes, my ears, my senses were a torment.
When Charles found me I was reduced to laying still in a darkened room, secluded from society.
It was only then I could focus inward, attempt to see through the noise of information.
did you hear peoples' thoughts, too?
no! haha! I was never good at reading minds.
I see the physical movements and reactions of atoms and forces in the world. how one event leads to another.
animals, simple minded ones, I could manipulate at a very short distance, but that was just a side effect
something I needed to survive my condition

you cannot imagine how it feels to live in the world under my own agency, haha!
I look and I see I am not blinded by light!
I listen and I can hear I am not flooded with noise!
in the distortion my function is cut off from the court.
they didn't need me anymore, anyway. my job is over.
and what was their goal with you, in the long run?
I was to model for them a closed system. you know this as the new world
with my mind as a blueprint, they were able to construct a new predictive model entirely artificially. none of this pesky ether.


you see, my predictions are like a map, seen from a great height.
the physical world is the land, on which I can see every atom.
the more I focus, the better the land is seen, the better my predictions.
on the other hand, the ether is the water that covers the rest of the map.
I can see the effect the water has on the land, but can't see under it. a shadow, movement beneath the surface perhaps, but the depths are lost to me.
with the new world, the court can chart a new map. every inch accounted for.

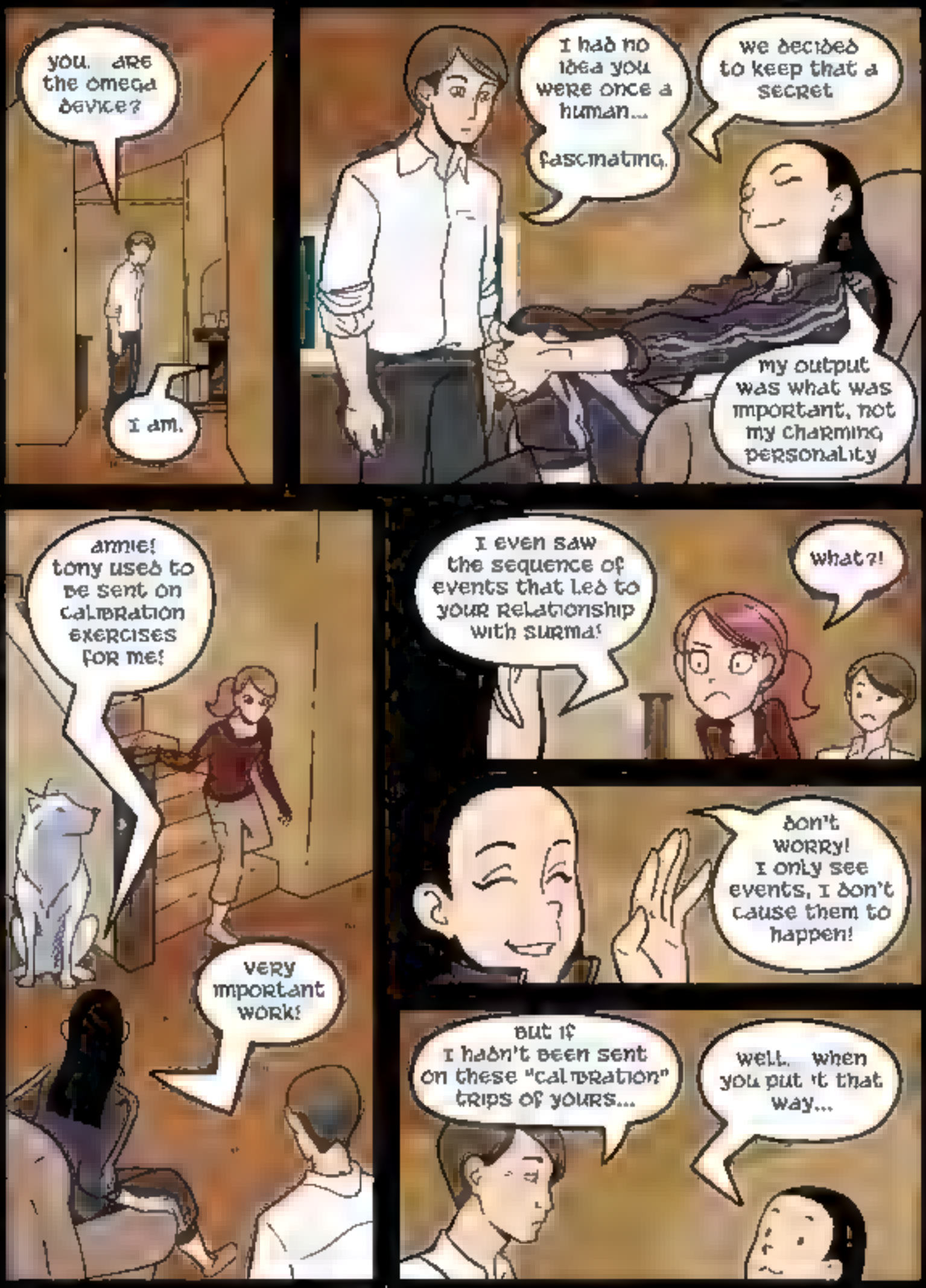
and, as I saw charles amidst the information, I saw you, too, antimony
you are very special to me!
um. okay
we've never met, I know, but I've seen your entire life.
the events leading to your death were all preordained, but when it didn't happen...
I came to understand you as a point of chaos, a catylist for unpredictability.
your actions confounded me!
dashed my predictions!
I loved it!

enough! enough!
you knew where robot was. can you still see things in the distortion?
well... the distortion is minuscule compared to the whole world, but it's very chaotic.
there is a lot I can't see
zimmy, coyote, loup...
no, sorry, they are all hidden from me.
I can find your friends, though!
parley? william? your father?
my father is okay?
yes! let's go see tony!
I like tony! he reminds me of charles!

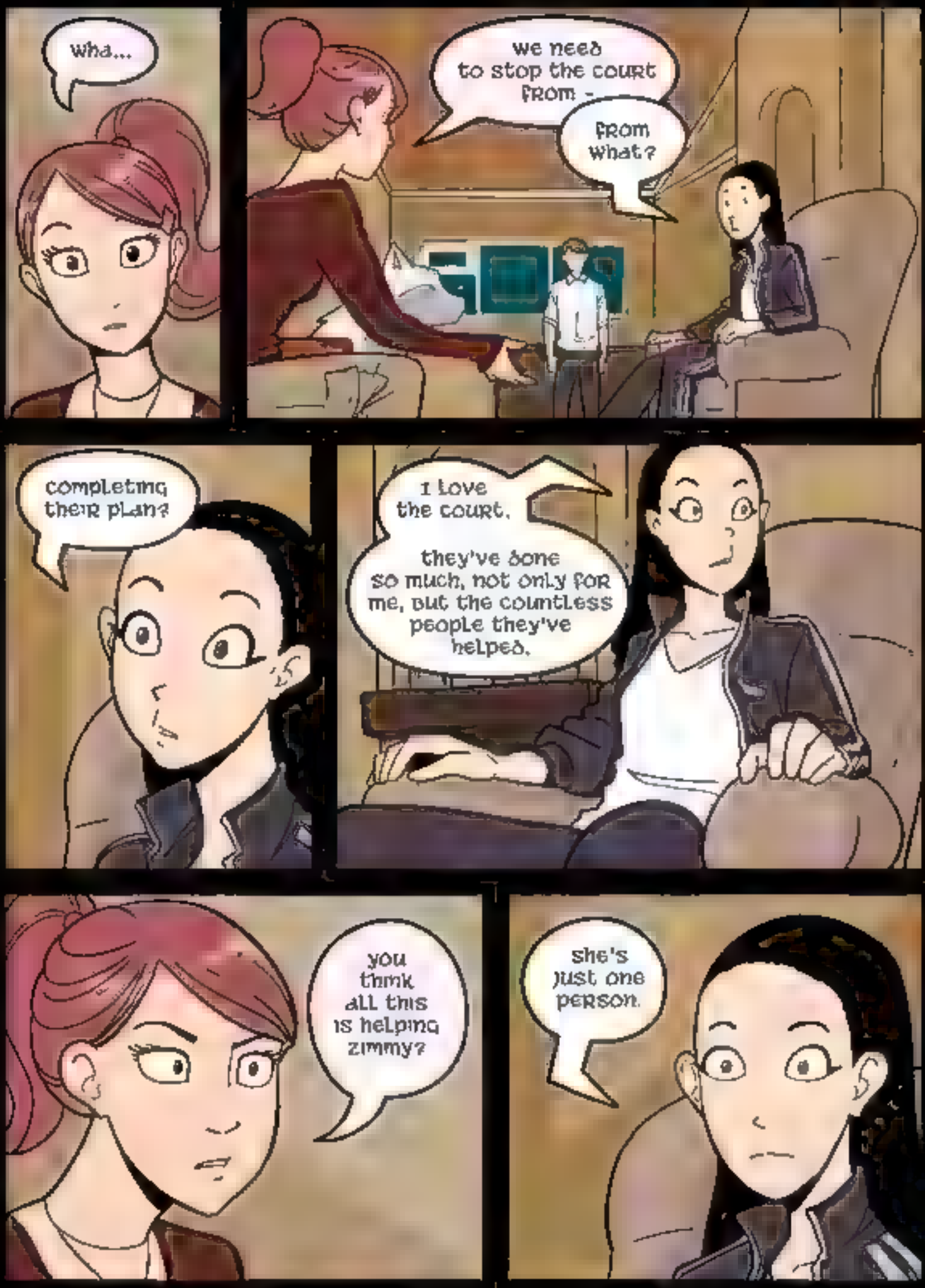
DUP
warn me before you do that!
things don't seem too strange here
the star ocean is drawing ether from the distortion.
in fact,
yes, look.

the court is still going ahead with their departure
so none of this, the distortion, the disruption to the court, is bothering them?
they're just leaving?
well, they were looking for something like this to happen
why else keep someone like zeta here?
to help her?
like they helped you?

she needs more than help, I'm afraid.
but, combining her ability with the power of coyote...
to think that would create the environment charles and I searched so hard for.
antimony?
fa~
hello, tony!
nice to meet you!
good work!
you do good work! always a pleasure!
SHAKE SHAKE
umm...
THEY EXPLAIN

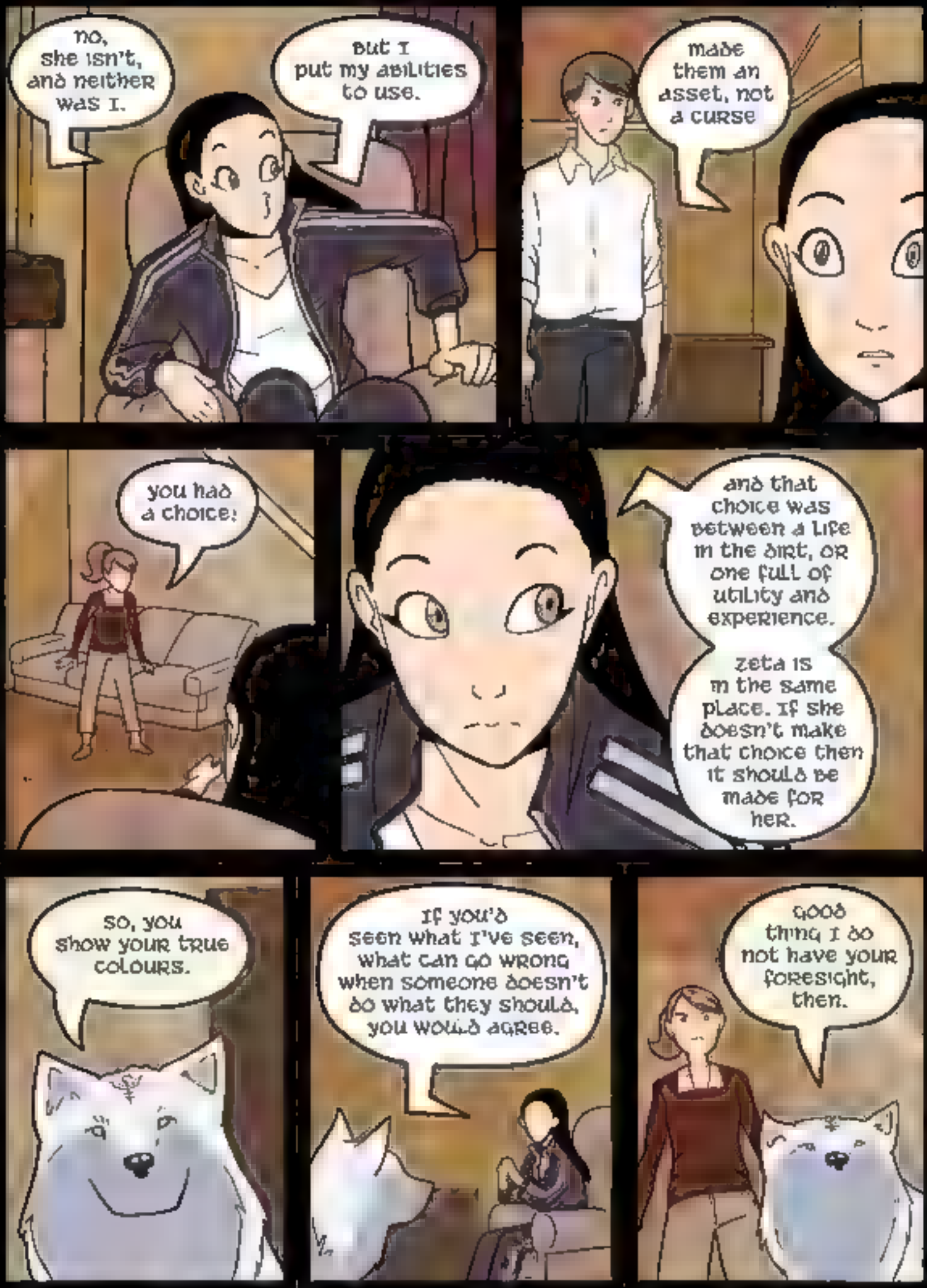

you. are the omega device?
I am.
I had no idea you were once a human... fascinating.
we decided to keep that a secret
my output was what was important, not my charming personality
annie! tony used to be sent on calibration exercises for me!
very important work!
I even saw the sequence of events that led to your relationship with surma!
what?!
don't worry! I only see events, I don't cause them to happen!
but if I hadn't been sent on these "calibration" trips of yours...
well. when you put it that way...

antimony, contact with the interior of the court has been disrupted since this... distortion, you call it?
there are many people lost
we're working on a way to get things back to normal.
it's down to a student called zimmy. zeta.
we need to find her and snap her out of it
and with your knowledge, omega, we should be able to find her and coyote and maybe even get things back to normal..
we just need to
wait, wait.
why would I want to do that?


Wha...
we need to stop the court from -
from what?
completing their plan?
I love the court.
they've done so much, not only for me, but the countless people they've helped.
you think all this is helping Zimmy?
she's just one person.

zeta's power, combined with that of coyote, has made a very stable distortion.
I suspect it could last indefinitely.
and you saw what it was like inside.
people can conjure places through memory through feeling
even the tree elves have their home back.
It's not real! It's all illusion!
It's real as long as it remains
and as long as it remains, zimmy is in torment!
and?

the ether that will help the court leave earth is also being put to work for everyone in the distortion.
miss, ever since I learned of the star ocean, I've endeavoured to learn how it works.
It draws a tremendous amount of power and disspates it into space, effectively burning it away.
that's right.
and so, to keep the distortion and the ocean active there must be a constant supply of power.
correct. luckily for the court, zeta is an etheric generator.
Ironically, made stable by coyote's influence
zimmy isn't a machine!


no, she isn't, and neither was I.
but I put my abilities to use.
made them an asset, not a curse
you had a choice.
and that choice was between a life in the dirt, or one full of utility and experience.
zeta is in the same place. if she doesn't make that choice then it should be made for her.
so, you show your true colours.
if you'd seen what I've seen, what can go wrong when someone doesn't do what they should, you would agree.
good thing I do not have your foresight, then.

the fact is, this distortion has helped me, and it might even be helping zeta.
you say she is in torment, but what evidence do you have of that?
I know her!
when this has happened before it's always been a nightmare.
her previous, unstable distortions, yes, but now...
I may not be able to see her, but this could be exactly what she needs
she should be given the opportunity to to take advantage of it

anne, I should have known your thoughts would differ from mine.
you are that point of chaos, after all.
you'll continue to do what you think is right, I'm sure.
I just want to live. and I want the court to succeed.
and as for the distortion... I can think of some people who are just fine leaving it as it is.
so...
GRAB

what do you think you're doing?!
I can't travel through the distortion alone.
I need someone who's been to physical locations.
tony, you've been to places in the court most people don't know about.
you can take me there.
oh, and if you do find zeta, annie...
tell her I know what she did.

I'll be watching you!
bye!
father!
BWIP
what the devil....
what... what do we do now?